

LORD MORTLEY
OF
PATRICK HEADSTON

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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LORD MORLEY

Writer and Thinker

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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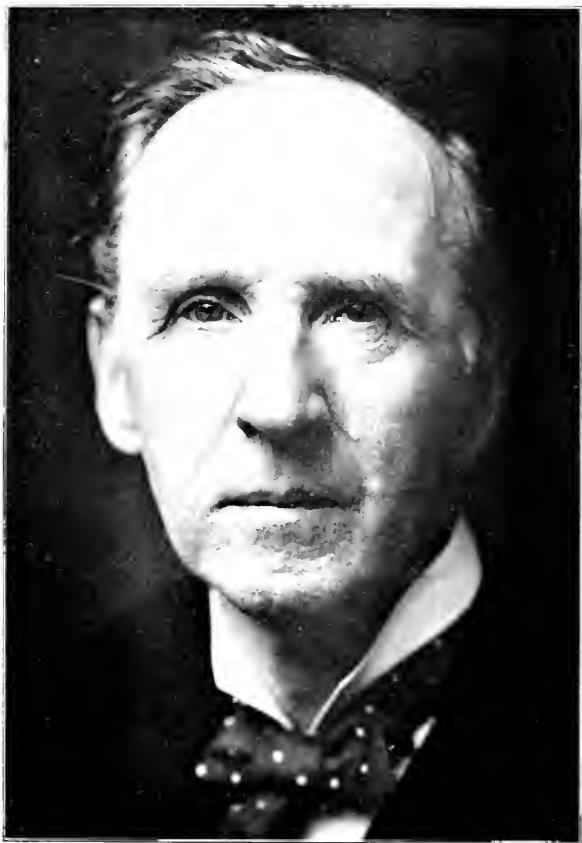
SKETCHES

"ODDMENTS."

"SUGGESTIVE FRAGMENTS."

IN PREPARATION

"J. M. BARRIE." A Study in Fairies and Mortals.



Lord Morley.

MOREL

Writer and Thinker

BY

ATRICK BRAYBROOKE

es. "G. K. Chesterton," "Some Thoughts"
by Hilaire Belloc, etc.

INTRODUCTION BY
W. B. MAXWELL





Chlorine

LORD MORLEY,

Writer and Thinker

BY

PATRICK BRAYBROOKE

*Author of "G. K. Chesterton," "Some Thoughts
on Hilaire Belloc," etc.*

INTRODUCTION BY
W. B. MAXWELL



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Author's Note

IN view of the nature of the will of the late Lord Morley I wish it to be clearly understood that *all* the matter contained in this book has been obtained from either the writings of Lord Morley himself or newspaper articles about him. None of his documents or letters have been touched.

I have to thank Mr. W. B. Maxwell for so kindly writing an Introduction to this study, my thanks are also due to my wife for her valuable suggestions.

PATRICK BRAYBROOKE.

TO MY WIFE

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Introduction

TO "introduce" Mr. Patrick Braybrooke is perhaps to perform a quite superfluous duty ; because, as well as being a diligently active journalist and writer of essays, he has become increasingly known to readers of books by his recent appreciations of Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Hilaire Belloc. Those volumes, as will be remembered, contained not so much a description of the authors themselves as a close analysis of their published work ; but it was obvious that in each case he brought to his task a strong sympathy and a very considerable admiration for the man behind the pen. Shy of lapsing into the old-fashioned fault of hero-worship, careful to refrain from the modern habit of personalities, assuming an air of detachment even when drawn to eulogy by his subject, he nevertheless made an individual portrait while embodying the results of his painstaking researches into such general material as was available to all the world.

Mr. Braybrooke pursues the same method in the following study of Lord Morley ; but I think that he has expanded it, and that, moreover, the

regard and respect are disclosed more clearly and definitely. This is as it should be, for Lord Morley both as statesman and man of letters had established so firm a place in the public regard that no work which dealt with him coldly would satisfy or please. Mr. Braybrooke, then, whether we go all the way with him or only half his distance, is rightly enthusiastic and equally right in giving the plainest terms to his enthusiasm.

He believes that Lord Morley was "a very great writer," that the *Life of Gladstone* is one of the masterpieces of English literature; and, making an avowed endeavour to show that his author's versatility was no less remarkable than his power of expression, his steadfastness of aim, his profound knowledge, he conducts us through that wonderful picture gallery formed by the Morley biographies of famous men with much worth saying about each portrait. To each he adds his own sketch of the period and his own brief historical survey; indeed not the least interesting side of the book is the freely expressed philosophy or point of view of its writer. Whether the subject be Gladstone or Voltaire, Burke or Diderot, Mr Braybrooke finds occasion to allow his personal likes and dislikes as well as his derived opinions to be perceived without any effort on the reader's part. But let me hasten to add that since these views and opinions, whether we agree with them or not, are essentially worthy, his frankness cannot give offence.

His quotations from the actual writings of Lord Morley are always apt and never lengthy. In

them one sees again and yet again some of the best-noted characteristics of Lord Morley's mind—the inflexible honesty, the generous contempt for shams even in the highest places, the intolerance of humbug, hypocrisy, and purely intellectual pride ; his love of genuine cultivation ; his ardent desire to make literature the helpmate of the many rather than the few, to open the doors of knowledge for all to pass into the once jealously guarded citadel ; his natural hopefulness, and his occasional pessimism or momentary despair when confronted with a progress so gradual as to be scarcely perceptible, a reactionary force that seems to press mankind backward towards darkness after each little step forward towards the light. We see too that love of the French language which led him perhaps to an exaggerated estimate of French writers, together with the determination to be fair to all other countries which perhaps led him now and then to be slightly unfair in his criticisms of his own nation. And yet in truth, Lord Morley was above all else a patriot and an Englishman. In the very moment of disparagement he throbs and glows into unexpected praise. As for instance, when he said :

“ What stirs the hope and moves the aspiration of our Englishman ? Surely nothing in the heavens above or on the earth beneath ! The English are, as a people, little susceptible in the region of the imagination. But they have done good work in the world, acquired a splendid historic tradition of stout combat for

good causes, founded a mighty and beneficent empire. . . Their lands have been the home of great and forlorn causes though they could not always follow the transcendental flights of their foreign allies and champions."

I have no hesitation in recommending Mr. Braybrooke's book for its usefulness as well as its interest. It should send all its readers to a closer examination of Lord Morley's numerous and admirable works.

W. B. MAXWELL.

Chapter One

MORLEY ON EDMUND BURKE

IN the life of every great man, there appears to be upon investigation a principle to which he adheres, and to which he so persistently adheres that he lays himself open to the charge of bigotry. For really bigotry is probably but the very rigid adherence to some principle. Though this position may become an abuse, yet at the same time keeping to a single principle outweighs its vices by the beauty and tenacity of its virtues.

Those who take the trouble to study the character of Edmund Burke must do so with the spectacle before them of a very single hearted man, in fact a man so possessed of an ideal or principle that it has led many critics to dislike Burke because he was at times blinded by this remarkable adherence to a certain aspect of human conduct.

Morley in his study of Burke is eminently alive to the fact that Burke was possessed of a certain principle to such a degree that it was impossible for him at times to realise that this principle might need some modification. It is one of the misfortunes of the man or (in a more limited sense) woman who are idealists that they seldom realise that ideals are not lost because they happen to be pursued by ways variable from those that had seemed to be the only method of approach.

Morley has a very penetrating insight into the character of Burke, he is able to lay his finger on the weaknesses of that brilliant mind, he is able to detect the underlying strength that directed all his judgments, though at times they were perhaps misdirected, Morley is not hard on Burke, with that superficial and supercilious contempt employed by some critics. Burke was above all a thinker and here Morley is very insistent, the fact that he was entirely immersed in politics all his life made him perhaps less valuable as a thinker than he might have been if he had been but a man with a pen in hand that need not be used to write of the politics and political movements and situations of the day. For though thought is permanent, politics by their very nature are temporary and not entirely honest. The thinker is likely to be held by rather fixed ideas that do not readily adapt themselves to the creed of the politician, whose only constancy is usually inconstancy.

Enough to say at once that what Burke all his life held for was Order, and that government should be for the betterment of the people and not for its own ambitions whether individual or national. Morley all through his book stresses this great ideal of Burke, the great ideal that made him at once the most noble of statesmen ; yet at the same time laid him open to the charge of watching the trend of events with a blind eye.

Early on in his career Burke began to worry himself over the question of subscription to the Articles, those thirty-nine models of clever juggling

that every curate thinks he can improve and every bishop knows are as about as antiquated as his gaiters and shovel hat. So Morley gently leads up to the spectacle ; waxing indignant over this sore question of subscription, does not Morley insist that Burke loves order, therefore it is not surprising to find him adamant that he will allow of no relaxation in that quarter.

Thus writes Morley of the perturbed Burke who fears for his soul lest the articles be in any way maligned.

“ Burke fought zealous against encouraging freedom of thought and ever leaning towards prescription, custom, grooves and the Church exalting her mitred front in Court and Parliament.”

It is then evident that Morley is a little appalled at the position of Burke, because it is a warning of that rather blatant disregard for the allowing of a different interpretation of thought that so often made Burke err on the side of narrow-mindedness.

Indeed Morley says but a little later that at no time in the career of Burke did he ever cease from an intolerance of anything that tended in the very slightest to interfere with order, it is the fundamental weakness of him, that order must be kept when it can by its very progress only result in disorder whether of thought as in a too rigid subscription to the articles, or result in a far worse state ; had the French “ order ” not been broken by the Revolution so hated by Burke. But this is to anticipate the time when we shall see Morley

thinking of Burke in those closing years when his whole life ideals seemed to be shattered with as much certainty as the meeting of the National Assembly shattered for ever the crown of France.

'Rather it will now be convenient to follow Burke in his attitude to the English constitution. Morley makes no bones that as a politician Burke knew his own mind and had no hesitation in making the fact known.

In fact Burke was a most troublesome and trying person. As earlier he had been entirely against any relaxation with regard to the Subscription to the articles, so later we discover that he is equally insistent that the Constitution must not be reformed. Morley writes with perhaps a little irony on the word "uniformly," "Burke uniformly refused to give his countenance to any proposals such as these which involved a clearly organic change in the constitution." Burke could not (his opponents would say would not) see that Parliament was not an order that changeth not, he looked upon it as a form of order once and for all not delivered to the saints, but delivered to the well being of the English people. He never all through his life appeared to reason that "order" was an evolutionary thing that had need to change as the conditions in which it lived themselves changed.

It is obvious that Morley sees how absolutely wrong Burke was in his attitude to the Constitution for in the time that he lived "the history of the English constitution over the whole period of Burke's career and some years after his death,

is the history of about the most inadequate and mischievous set of political arrangements that any country has ever yet had to endure." This is of course saying quite clearly that Burke lent his support to nefarious schemes, but if he did, it is only fair to him to remember that he lent his support not to the Constitution because it was corrupt but because it seemed to Burke to be the embodiment of his sacred word "order." And as Morley says with such brilliant understanding of the mind of Burke that looked upon the Constitution as something appertaining to the Spiritual; "the Constitution was sacred to him as the voice of the Church and the oracles of her saints are sacred to the believer."

Perhaps some of the greatest of Burke's work lay in his position with regard to America. It opened up in a concrete example the ever thorny question of the right of the Mother Country over her Colonies. Morley is not by any means opposed to the position of Burke with regard to America; independence is the keynote, was his cry, to the greatness of that country. And could there have been a truer prophet?

On the question at any rate of America, Morley is careful to point out the unselfishness of Burke. Knowing that the Independence of America was necessary to the well-being of that country, he could not but help knowing that her Independence would bring no renown to his beloved British Constitution. Yet unswervingly Burke set his face against that rather philosophical position of "right" that would have kept (if it could), the

country of America under the yoke of England.

Thus writes Morley keenly cognisant of the fact that the Independence of America must have been heartrending to the almost fanatical love of Burke for patriotism ; " though above the narrow vices incident to patriotism in weaker and less loftily moral souls, it could not have been more grievous to him to look back upon the circumstances under which England and her sons parted company than it was mortifying to look forward to a glory for America, which, if statesmen had been prescient and nations just, might have been added to the abundant glories of England."

Yet Burke might not have been so depressed had he been able to look forward a hundred years and see America great, mighty, notwithstanding the evident difficulties of a cosmopolitan upbringing, a country that has led the world in commerce, a country that has not in spite of its modernity, forgotten that the past is worthy of note, a country that has a future no sane man would predict, a country that may one day be the means of bringing to the world the spectacle of a unity whose bulwarks are peace and progress.

Possibly there is nothing so shocking to the Irishman to-day, as the appalling state of the English mind towards that country. A more vast and reprehensible system of muddling could scarcely be imagined than that which English politicians have tried to thrust upon Ireland. There has been no more appalling exhibition of superficial arrogance and cowardice than that displayed by many English newspapers in regard to

Irish affairs ever seen in the history of that ill-fated and much distressed country. Burke, an Irishman must have turned in his grave at the stupendous follies enacted lately with regard to Ireland.

In his own day Morley tells us that "unlike too many Irishmen Burke was never so absorbed in other public affairs as to forget the peculiar interests of his native country." Burke found in Ireland a hatred of the Catholics that has remained ever since. He endeavoured very much to make it come to pass that the Catholics should be admitted to take their part in the elective franchise. For as Morley points out, Burke hated the nonsense that excluded two-thirds of the population from having a say in the election of those by whom they were governed because they happened to be Catholics. "Burke did his best, while he was upon the scene, to accelerate the progress of a large and liberal tolerance."

With the question of English rule in India we are embarking on a very unpleasant subject. Whether the English have any right to India is a consideration that cannot be fully gone into here. The fact remains that we have not in many instances distinguished ourselves in our rule out in India, we have sent out statesmen whose only qualification has been a total inability to do anything but stir up trouble in this country. The Indian sees himself treated as an equal over here, he sees the universities open to him, he is the guest of English hostesses and rather gushing spinsters who think they are solving the problem of East and West, and then back in his own country, the Indian.

is treated with a polite indignity while he is ruled by some of the most inefficient of the Empire's servants.

What then according to Morley was the attitude of Burke towards India? We have seen that for America his key-word was Independence, we have seen that for Ireland his key-word was Tolerance, for India we shall see that it was Courage.

As to whether Burke was right in his policy towards India depends as Morley points out upon the way we look at things. On the whole with certain modifications Morley is inclined to be sympathetic towards Burke and his Indian policy.

As Burke finely says: "The cries of India were given to seas and winds to be blown about in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean. Besides the great modification of fundamental ideas with reference to India which had been effected by the proceedings against Hastings, and in which Burke took the leading part he was active in another highly important change. The Reports of the various select committees upon Indian affairs—the most important of them all the ninth and the eleventh, being drawn up by Burke himself had shown conclusively that the existing system of government was thoroughly corrupt and thoroughly inadequate. Hence the introduction of Fox's famous Bill and the introduction of Pitt's India Bill."

It is indeed difficult to come to any decision as to the value of the Indian policy of Burke, but

Morley is probably right in insisting in his cautious way that Burke and India can only be judged upon the criterion of what men think was fair and good for that great Eastern Country. We must not condemn Burke too harshly, we must remember his character, his love of fairplay, his hatred and contempt of the trickery that has blackened so much of the rule of the British in India, that misrule and want of perception that ultimately found a climax in the dreadful Indian Mutiny. The tolerance and judgment of Morley for Burke is but one of the many indications of greatness of his grasp of the characters of famous men.

It will now be necessary to consider Burke and the French Revolution. Morley devotes much space and thought to this. In whatever judgment we may place the Revolution it is well to remember as Morley does, that Burke only lived when that great and terrible conflagration had not had time to be seen from afar off. To the dying years of Burke there was the spectacle of the sudden shattering in France of all that which he held most sacred. He suddenly saw order displaced by violent revolution, Catholicism (weak though it was) changed to a blatant Atheism, he heard in the far, far distance, the creak of the overladen carts on the way to the guillotine, he saw with two strokes, one a political one (the Meeting of The National Assembly) the other (the guillotine that struck off the head of Louis and later the head of Marie Antoinette) the violent ending of what he prized above all; the Constitution.

It could not then but be expected that Burke

would have a violent and unswerving detestation of the French Revolution. Morley while usually sympathetic to Burke is with regard to the attitude of him to the Revolution, inclined to be a little bitter. He complains with a certain amount of truth that Burke was guilty of the rather popular but dangerous sin of reaction. And Morley is especially annoyed that the rather small people who feared for themselves when they saw the sudden onslaught of the Revolution, felt themselves supported by the antagonism of Burke for that conflict raging just across the English Channel. It is not so much that Morley dislikes Burke's position as that it gave to the reactionaries who feared for their own properties a very strong prop to lean on, for at this time the influence of Burke was enormous. So Morley writes a little pathetically.

"The leader of a reactionary movement may sometimes as in this case (Burke) claim a measure of admiration from us. It is when we come to the rank and file of reaction, the greedy bishops, the fat headed squires, the hide bound politicians, the crass princes that we find it hard to forgive the man of genius who made himself the organ of their selfishness, their timidity and their blindness."

And Morley indignant at the way Burke has been "used" writes in no small measured tone, but more in sadness than in anger :

"Is there any spectacle more grievous in history than this, of such a crew, led by such

a man as Edmund Burke and dragging after them such a man as William Pitt ? ”

It is of course one of those unexplainable tricks of fortune that caused Burke with his love of order to end his days embittered by the spectacle of the French Revolution ; for however grandly we may say, in the light of subsequent events, that by this Revolt Europe found salvation, at the time it could not have appeared anything more than a bloody riot. Burke would have seen the fall of the Bastille, he would have been the spectator of Danton seemingly responsible for the September massacres, he must have been amazed at the inconsistency of the character of Robespierre, he would have seen the Church in France apparently replaced by Atheism. He could not have seen forward far enough to see that it was impossible that France should not revolt and yet live.

But it was not an entire disadvantage that Burke should then have lived as Morley points out. For seeing that Burke so loved order it was of course to be expected that with the spectacle of the French Revolution he would give of his best to the writing of his hatred of disorder.

Morley with scrupulous fairness is careful to vindicate Burke from the charge of a mean and paltry reason for his dislike of the Revolution. He is careful to make it clear that though Burke did by his actions become the leader of the Reactionaries, yet his motives were very different to theirs. For Morley is always insistent that the Revolution was in the true sense Progress, while the sole concern of the rather small and superficial

Reactionaries was that they might suffer some personal loss by the enlightenment that was sweeping over the peasantry of France and might spread to the "peasantry" of England. In a fine and far-seeing passage Morley does his best not to be *too* cross with the ultra conservatism of Burke.

"We may be sure that the motives which were at the bottom of his envenomed war against the Revolution were different from the motives of the men who chose him for their leader. He hated the tenor of affairs in France with a large and understanding hatred. He knew what it was he was attacking and he knew distinctly why he attacked it, and how his present views were no more than corollaries of the views which he had maintained throughout a public life of five and twenty years. What the Revolution meant (to the Reactionaries) where its errors lay, why its aspirations were premature, to what high ends these aspirations pointed, were matters on which no power on earth could have enlightened them. Of Burke's writings on the other hand it may be truly said that the further we get away from the immediate passions of that time the more surprisingly do we find how acute and at the same time how broad and rational his insight was, though neither acute nor broad enough."

The whole fault really of Burke so clearly brought out by Morley is this. Burke was imbued by his hatred of change (because it was a probable stepping stone to the breaking of "order") to such

an extent, that he could not see that the time had come in France when it was absolutely imperative that there should be a new form of government. Slowly but surely the French throne by excess and arrogance had cut out its own grave. But Burke as earlier in his life had been unable to see that some relaxation might be desirable in regard to the Subscription to the Articles could not adapt his mind to the fact that in France history was leading to change. If Burke could have but seen that his life ideal was a broader thing than he realised he might have been spared the hatred that many people had for him. It would not have been inconsistency (no man would have hated this so much as Morley) but freedom from a rather narrow bigotry.

Morley probably understands the character of Burke as well as any man ever has. He has detected his weaknesses but while condemning them has not gloated over them. He sees the great ideals of Burke for the Constitution, the genius of his political ambitions for America, his care for Ireland. Of India, Morley wisely is carefully tolerant. Tolerance is the keynote of the book, Morley was dealing with a very great man, a man full of a tenacity to a purpose that brought down upon him hatred and sometimes blinded his judgments. Yet it has been found in the light of history that Burke though he made mistakes was on the side of that which endures. Morley has with great power shown how Burke all through his life kept before him the ideals of "order" and government that should make the lot of the people as tolerable as it could be.

Chapter Two

ON VOLTAIRE

THERE is perhaps no name that has been subjected to so much abuse as that of Voltaire. Almost universally the Church with certain bigotry has pointed the finger of upbraiding at Voltaire. He has been the mouth-piece of superficial atheists whose only claim to any note is their spleen, his name is whispered at theological colleges where men are taught to hate everything that does not seem to fall in with the orthodox urbanity of the theological professors, very pious clergymen sometimes mention Voltaire in the pulpit and in so doing assume a melancholy manner as though they were dealing with an arch-devil.

It is perhaps only natural that the Church should hate Voltaire as much as he hated *it*. Voltaire was one of the few men who attacked the Church from right motives, he attacked it because it was an organisation whose Divinity *seemed* born of the Devil, he attacked it because its ministers were cruel and pious humbugs, he attacked it because in the name of the Religion of Christ, the ministers of Christ's Church were guilty of the most abominable behaviour possible.

It is a remarkable fact how much a man's position with regard to religious matters depends upon the manner of his life. It is of course obvious that that which is unmoral is likely to lead to dislike and contempt of that which is moral. But there are many motives which lead to hatred of the Church. Nietzsche hated the Church because it would have destroyed his philosophy, Swift though a Dean hated the Church because it was too much of a buffoon to see that it was neglecting a genius, the sinner hates the Church because he knows that it only holds out to him punishment in Hell or the ridiculous proposition of an instant change of life and outlook, the young who hate the Church do so because they see in its ranks a number of paid performers whose duty appears to them to be to put a stop on their pleasures and wishes, the worldly woman hates the Church because it hints of the end of this phase of life, Voltaire hated the Church because he saw it a cruel tyrannical monster which set a belief, disregarded reason, broke men on the wheel when it could not break their creed, burnt those who proclaimed the right to think, in a word, it was the most blasphemous caricature of Christ visible to men. And to-day it is only a little better because Society does not permit of burning for Free Thought, breaking on the Wheel for difference of opinion.

With this preliminary survey of the Voltairean "feeling" it is our task to see what Morley has to say of that great French genius.

To do this it will be peraps best to take the various attitudes that Voltaire took to events and

happenings that crossed his path, we shall discover the background of the period in which Voltaire lived, we shall see how Morley considered England had so much influence on him, further we must discover what was the place of Voltaire as regards literature and lastly that upon which Voltaire has earned such hatred at the hands of the Pious, his religious opinions must be discussed. Morley enables us to see Voltaire again as though he still lived, he enables us to see France as though we were back in the 18th century, he enables us to see the terrible state of tyranny to which the Catholic Church had fallen, he enables us to realise the far reaching effects of the Voltaire genius ; yet we are not blinded to the essential fact that Voltaire rather attacked the temporary side of things and left alone the more permanent and deeper issues, thus showing a certain superficiality of character of which we have plenty of evidence in the way in which Morley exposes some of the rather trivial reasonings of Voltaire. For before treating of Voltaire step by step as Morley does, it is absolutely imperative to remember that Voltaire attacked the Church as he saw it, as he saw how corrupt it was, he did not attack it because he hated morality or disliked the ethics of Christ.

When Voltaire was born, France would have appeared to be under the ban of a sentiment that looked upon all use of the intellect in matters of progress as something to be heartily deplored, put down ruthlessly and in no way allowed to evolve. Much as one dislikes having to blame the Church

for this situation, no student who looks at France in the earlier part of the 18th century can escape seeing that in every direction anything that tended to progress was systematically blocked. The reason of course was that the Catholic Church knew that once it was found out how it relied for its power on a great deal of superstition its power would very rapidly dwindle. It is not our purpose to go into the question of the Church to-day, but it must be remarked that even now the Churches show a reluctance to encourage intellect. Morley sees that Voltaire was born to a world that lay in the grip of an intellectual sloth. Thus he writes of the great French philosopher: "Voltaire, if he adroitly or sagely preserved his buckler, felt that the day was come to throw away the scabbard; that it was time to trust firmly to the free understanding of men for guidance in the voyage after truth, and to the instincts of uncorrupted benevolence in men for the upholding of social justice. Voltaire boldly put the great question and he boldly answered it. He asked whether the sacred records were historically true, the Christian doctrine divinely inspired and spiritually exhaustive and the Christian Church a holy and beneficent organisation."

And he found that the questions required an answer that admitted of no doubt. "He answered these questions for himself and for others beyond possibility of misconception. The records were saturated with fable and absurdity, the doctrine imperfect at its best and a dark and tyrannical superstition at its worst, and the Church was the

arch curse and infamy." Some attempt to see why Voltaire arrived at this position must be made when we deal with the question of him and religion. Enough has been said to show how clearly Morley understands the hateful position in France when Voltaire was born, the gross superstitions, the odious tyranny of a half-educated priesthood and the general dislike and distrust of learning.

It is indeed melancholy reading, but in company with Morley we will journey to England with Voltaire where he was to be so greatly influenced.

How significant for Voltaire was his journey to England can be deduced from the very opening words Morley uses in the chapter on that part of his career. "Voltaireism may be said to have begun from the flight of its founder from Paris to London. This, to borrow a name from the most memorable instance of outward change marking inward revolution, was the decisive hegira, from which the philosophy of destruction in a formal shape may be held seriously to date." The philosophy of destruction. How prone is the average mind to look upon that as something essentially wicked, as soul destroying; yet that which destroys an evil even if it be in the guise of a Church, is a grand noble thing, risking hatred, misunderstanding and active (as in many cases) persecution. Voltaire arrived in England to find that there at any rate men were allowed a certain amount of freedom of thought. Once again it is apparent that the fact of a country being under the influence of the Catholic Church is synonymous with frustration of any attempt either by the

individual or by a movement to secure a right to the discussion of the Rational.

"In a tumult of just indignation" says Morley "he quitted France."

In England we soon find that Voltaire was attracted to Deism that belief that was so to influence his own thought. At the other extreme, Morley is able to trace how much Voltaire was attracted by those queer but genuine people the Quakers for "in the Quakers Voltaire saw something quite different from the purely political pretensions and internecine quarrels of doctrine of the ordinarily worldly sets." From a close study of Morley, it would seem how eminently able is he to realise that Voltaire was born at the psychological moment. It seems that great thinkers are really born just when they are most needed, they seem to be born when the sun is setting on the past glory of some nation or enterprise that has begun to fall. Christ born to give the world a hope when the Greek philosophers with all their wondrous learning failed to give men any hope, Voltaire born to give to the world the right to use the intellect. Had it not been for the disgraceful condition of France probably Voltaire would not have left that country, he would have failed to benefit by the influence of England, he would have failed probably to write that which though it did much to destroy the Church did far more to build it up. He prevented it if by rough methods, from committing suicide. Morley though he does not always agree with Voltaire is in the main on his side.

But alas though Voltaire carried what he had

learnt in England to France "he lived to see a band of trenchant and energetic disciples develop principles which he had planted into a system of dogmatic atheism." If he lived to-day he would be still further distressed to hear himself spoken of by every superficial follower of a blatant and supercilious dogmatism as an Atheist because he dared to think, because he dared to attack the odious doctrines of the Jesuits and the Jansenists, because he dared to draw attention to the fact that Christ was slowly but surely being Crucified afresh by the Church in France in the days in which he lived.

We have now come to the most interesting and far reaching part of our study of Morley and Voltaire. Though I do not wish to anticipate what must be said in a later chapter as regards Morley and Literature, in dealing with Voltaire and his place as a writer it may not be out of place to quote, before turning to the particular example of Voltaire, something Morley has to say on what are the ideals and the birthright of true literature.

To come down more to the particular Morley is writing of literature as a profession. Thus he writes a little perhaps perplexed that men of letters have not a little more imagination than to turn their calling into a profession as much as a doctor or lawyer.

"In our own time the profession of letters is placed with other polite avocations, and those who follow it for the most part accept the traditional social ideas of the time, just as clergymen, lawyers and physicians accept them.

The modern man of letters corresponds to the ancient sophist whose office it was to confirm adorn and propagate the current prejudice."

But enquire what Literature was at the time when Voltaire was born ; we soon find that to write books was to make oneself into that then hated thing an " Intellectual," to-day possibly what in a more limited sense we might call a " highbrow," a person of rather high conceit and somewhat low manners.

To be a writer of books then was to proclaim oneself an enemy of the current superstitions of the time whether in Church or State. Thus the young man who wished to become a Man of Letters in France in the 18th century was, so Morley writes, hard put to it :

" Parents heard of a son's design to go to Paris and write books or to mix with those who wrote books, with the same dismay with which a respectable Athenian heard of a son following Socrates."

So our imagination need not be very much evoked to make us realise that Voltaire was not going to be exactly popular.

But it is high time to turn to Voltaire himself. How can we regard him as a Man of Letters ?

There is no doubt that Morley does think very highly of Voltaire as a Literary Man yet he had his limitations, he was occasionally somewhat superficial.

" Literature being concerned to impose form, to diffuse the light by which common men are

able to see the great host of ideas and facts that do not shine in the brightness of their own atmosphere, it is clear what striking gifts Voltaire had in this way. He had a great deal of knowledge, and he was ever on the alert both to increase and broaden his stock and what was still better, to impart of it to everybody else."

I have said that in some ways Voltaire was inclined to be superficial. I am aware that to bring this charge against so brilliant a mind and so brilliant a writer is likely to appear as somewhat harsh. But the fact remains that in the works of every great writer there does appear at times to be superficial judgments. The reason for this is probably that too much is attempted. Voltaire if he was able with irresistible logic to show how debased the Catholic Church of his time was, did at the same time make but a feeble contribution to the ever thorny and apparently insoluble question of immortality, Chesterton if he is the best critic of Dickens has made a silly error in trying to make out Scrooge was only a poser, Belloc if he is perhaps the best critic of the French Revolution is very nearly childish in regard to the Jewish question. I cannot do better than take Voltaire's attitude to Hamlet to show his superficiality at its worst. His ridiculous attempt to disparage Hamlet is one of the most futile and ineffective uses to which he put his pen. Morley is inclined to think that Voltaire has been too hardly attacked by the critics for his opinion of Hamlet; whereas the fact is, he has not been

attacked nearly severely enough. Voltaire attempts to make fun of Hamlet as though the play were a cheap Lyceum melodrama at which the masses could guffaw and spit out orange pips on to the heads of those in the dress circle. "It is a rude and barbarous piece" says Voltaire. "Hamlet goes mad in the second act and his mistress goes mad in the third, the prince slays the father of his mistress, pretending to kill a rat and the heroine throws herself into the river." And so on in the vein adopted by some of our dramatic "critics" to-day. Morley rather excuses Voltaire but possibly Morley himself would not have been much attracted to Hamlet.

But with regard to Literature, Voltaire's superficiality in the matter of some things was not by any means confined to the rather cynical and want of perception attitude to plays like Hamlet, he also, so Morley makes it plain, suffered from a lack of appreciating humour, which possibly may account for his want of understanding with regard to Hamlet. For I do *suggest* that Hamlet in a sense can only be understood by those who have a sense of humour because without it they cannot hope to understand fully its deep and penetrating melancholy. This lack of humour on the part of Voltaire led to his failure as a writer of Comedies.

For it is a fact that (though this does not seem to be readily understood by many people) that farce (of which Voltaire was a supreme artist) is not the same as or even nearly akin to humour. Humour is a gentle expression of a magnanimous and pure soul, while farce is more often than not

a rather vulgar composition of satire and cynicism. Thus Morley writes of Voltaire as a wit, yet a failure in that most difficult of all theatrical expression, comedy.

"It has usually been thought surprising that Voltaire, consummate wit as he was, should have been so markedly unsuccessful in comedy. Certainly no one with so right a sense of the value of time as Voltaire himself had, will in our day waste many hours over his productions in this order. There are a dozen of them more or less, and we can only hope that they were the most rapid of his writings. The keynote seems to be struck in farce rather than in comedy; the intrigue, if not quite as slight as in Molière, is too forced; and the characters are nearly all excessively mediocre in conception. In one of the comedies *La Depositaires*, the poet presented the aged patroness of his youth, but the necessity of respecting current ideas of the becoming prevented him from making a great character out of even so striking a figure as *Ninon de L'Enclos*."

To sum up; probably Voltaire really suffered a good deal from the time in which he lived. He was not able to write with the spontaneity that he might have employed had he lived in a more sympathetic atmosphere (though of course he was extremely outspoken) yet unconsciously this hatred of the French for books had some effect on him. This point I do not think Morley insists upon enough though he writes with a ready under-

standing of where Voltaire failed, where he succeeded. I must now deal with Voltaire and his religious opinions which form so important a part of Morley's delightful and sympathetic study of that wonderful proto-Rationalist.

I have said a little earlier in this chapter that there were reasons why Voltaire hated the Church, they may be summed up as two, firstly that the Church was the enemy of the intellect (as it is to-day the enemy of much that will make society happier and less priest ridden) and secondly he saw that the Church was an active and tyrannous persecutor; staffed by cruel and superstitious bishops, teaching crass absurdities, eager for political strength (as to-day the Churches of this land are very largely political propagandists masquerading as Spiritual propagandists); and forcing men to hold a creed full of the grossest anomalies and contrary to reason assuming as a starting point something that had been by philosophy declared unproven, I mean the existence of God. From which, regardless of the failure to prove this, the Churches as Voltaire complained, *made* a God and put Him into the guise of a great and clever philosopher men called Christ. What has Morley to say of the opinions of Voltaire?

To discover this it will be most convincing to take the attitude of Voltaire to various theological questions as Morley describes them. Generally speaking the accusation of a certain superficiality in religious matters can be brought against Voltaire with much the same force as the accusation of superficiality

in certain of his literary criticisms, to whit his foolish contempt of Hamlet already mentioned, upon which Morley is not nearly severe enough.

To note with any adequacy all the opinions of Voltaire upon religion would require a book, in fact a book might be required to note the religious opinions of a coster as much as of a prime minister, so we shall take but a few of his perhaps more important observations. In the first place his enmity to Christianity; that creed to-day which is merely an emblem for a rather snobbish respectability which calls all men and women equal and at the same time suggests "the first shall be last and the last first," which is to-day followed by many people who are too lazy to think or too intellectual to be bothered to do so.

So Morley writes "Voltaire no doubt deliberately set himself to overthrow the Catholic theology, as well as the ecclesiastical system which was bound up with it and he did so for the very sufficient reason that it has always been impossible for men to become indulgent in act while they remained fanatical in belief." Has Morley ever written a sentence in which so much undeniable truth is contained? It is a queer thing that men when they become truly convinced about a matter of religion or politics always fail to see the other point of view, thus the medley of insincere and effeminate bishops who waste so much of the Nation's money to-day with a gross disregard for even making Christ a Person of moderate common sense, insisting that divorce is unchristian when it is the most effective way of putting down prostitution,

or the medley of unattractive and cynical spinsters who daily use public platforms to preach sex war and a civilisation that so rightly Mr St. John Ervine calls "effeminate."

Keenly indeed does Morley realise that Voltaire did not attack the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount "for there was not a man then alive more keenly sensible than he was of the generous humanity which is there enjoined with a force that so strangely touches the heart." It was left to a so-called "Atheist" to teach the Church that it had yet not learnt the rudiments of the teachings of its Founder, the Church has not yet learnt anything of Christ, it has turned His teaching into a theology and those who did not believe it in the time of Voltaire died by every conceivable cruelty.

Reason was the keynote of the life of Voltaire, in an allegorical work of his, Reason speaks thus; "let us enjoy these glorious days, let us rest here if they last; and if storms come on, let us go back to our well."

Voltaire is dead, Morley has too passed on.

It is the age of Reason, men to-day may think and not suffer persecution, Voltaire gave to the world the right to use the intelligence, he attacked the hateful superstitions of the day. To-day he is hated by those who are afraid lest their miserable creeds be so shallow that they "sink to rise no more."

Morley has written a searching study of Voltaire, it is a sympathetic book by a great thinker about a perhaps rather smaller thinker, it lays bare the

weakness of the man who skims the surface and misses the deeper things, it is a defence of one who dared all that Reason might flourish, that she might rear her head with pride, that she might be the means of overthrowing superstition, that she might make men think and not rely on authority, that that which men hold most dear at the end of life, the immortality of the soul ; might be established not by an arbitrary assumption laid down by an unthinking priesthood but established beyond shadow of doubt by experience.

Chapter Three

THE BIOGRAPHER OF GLADSTONE

I AM aware that it would have seemed appropriate after treating of Morley on Voltaire to have followed on with his work on that great French writer Rousseau. It would no doubt have seemed but the thing to do in dealing with the literary activity of Morley. But I have wished in this study to avoid anything that might have had the slightest suspicion of being in the category of a biographical nature. For this reason I have left treatment of Rousseau to a later chapter. I have also a wish that it should be evident as early as possible how versatile a writer Morley was. To demonstrate this, there could scarcely be a better proof, than to find Morley, the able and sympathetic student of Voltaire, the author of one of the most comprehensive and brilliant biographies ever written, that of William Ewart Gladstone. It is a work that is a classic, it is a work that at the time of its publication made a stir that is the fate of but few books and is the reward of but few authors.

In the space of a chapter it is naturally out of the question to give anything like fully the scope of Morley's book. I shall therefore use the process

I employed in my chapter on "Mr Belloc as an Essayist." I shall with a risk of being deemed shamefully inconsequent take a few points in the life of Mr Gladstone which appear to be the most important phases, by this means I shall hope to be able to give some idea of the scope of Morley's biography and at the same time I hope that it will be made clear how generally lay the sympathies of Morley with regard to Gladstone. Because it must not be forgotten (though it is no part of this present book) that Morley if (as I believe he was) was a very great writer, he was also perhaps in some ways even greater as a politician, though in that calling he would not I think have earned immortality. It is therefore of more than usual interest to try and unearth what Morley thought of probably the greatest politician who has ever graced English politics. For there have been prime ministers who were small men, there have been prime ministers who were great men, of Gladstone perhaps it is not an exaggeration to say that he stands alone, that he shines out as the expression of a man with such a vast intellect that even to the present day it has seemed ever to be more strikingly displayed.

Statecraft is a quality in which we as a nation are singularly lacking to-day, we do not seem to have the great statesmen we had in the last century, prime ministers to-day appear to have lost their dignity, they walk down Whitehall only to be snapped by the Photographic Agencies, they write *after* they have left office long and querulous articles to the press of the country, they

attend first nights and seem to enjoy the display of coarseness that is the counterpart of the average farce or comedy, they do not seem to have ideas of state but rather ideas of being jolly laughing good fellows who spend much time giving autographs to undistinguished and foolish women. I would not say that no prime minister since Gladstone has been great, but I do *suggest* that he was one of the last of that type of statesmen only England has ever seemed able to produce.

I must now attempt to see what I may in a chapter, about Morley as the writer of the life of the wonderful man we are considering.

Let me first of all look at Gladstone in the early days of his life and out of the mass of interest Morley finds in them, let me discover what he has to say of Gladstone and the Church, for dealing with a man of the intellect of Gladstone it cannot be without use to discover this, for men to-day do say and rightly, that those who are intellectual will have nothing of dogma. And as though of all men Gladstone realised that life on this earth was temporary, his was an incessant intrigue in the affairs of the Church.

“ His persistent incursions all through his long life into the multifarious doings, not only of his own anglican communion but of the Latin Church of the West, as well as of the motley Christendom of the East, puzzled and vexed political whippers-in, newspaper editors, leaders, colleagues, they were the despair of party caucuses ; and they made the neutral

man of the world smile, as eccentricities of genius and rather singularly chosen recreations. All this was, in truth, of the very essence of his character, the manifestation of its profound unity."

Thus does Morley at once get at the inside of the matter with his singular and remarkably penetrating insight. It is really only the very great man who can see the unity of things under their apparent diversity, it was of such a mind that Gladstone was the holder. Morley like the great writer he was, sees also that this outlook of unity could but bring for Gladstone misunderstanding and dislike whether in matters of politics or letters or religion. It is the small man who cannot see that there *must* be a unity, he sees an earthquake kill his neighbour by crushing him to death, nature, he says, is brutal, he fails to see on the other side of the world the newly born rose which if he saw it, would make him cry for enthusiasm ; but nature is sweet and kind and beautiful. But the really terrific genius of the type of Gladstone would see that though he saw something that *looked* cruel, it would be no reason for saying the universe is a disunity of cruelty and kindness, but rather that at the back the unity of kindness was there. Thus Morley as it were paves the way, he sees that Gladstone saw things as a whole, as an entity, as a unity, he must then puzzle those to whom only their immediate surroundings and thoughts could be apparent.

It was, so Morley sees, this thought of unity which was so much a part of the character of

Gladstone that made him turn to the Church as the best means of protecting and helping that unity, for as to-day Gladstone saw on all sides that men believed this, disbelieved that, were blown here by a wind of doctrine, were carried there by an eddy of new thought, there was nowhere that he might come to anchor and the Church seemed the harbour. So Morley conscious enough of the chaos of thought that stirred round Gladstone writes with eloquence of the intellectual whirlpool that engulfed smaller men than he.

“While poetic voices and the oracles of sages—Goethe, Scott, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge—were drawing men one way and another, or else were leaving the void turbid and formless, he in the midst of doubts, distractions and fears saw a steadfast light where the Oxford men saw it; in that concrete representation of the unseen Power that as he believed had made and guides and rules the world, in that Church Catholic and Apostolic which alone would have the force and the stoutness necessary to serve for a backwater against the deluge. Yet to understand Mr Gladstone’s case, we have ever to remember that what is called the catholic revival was not in England that which the catholic counter-revolution had been on the continent of Europe, primarily a political movement. Its workings were inward, in the sphere of the mind in thought and faith in idealised associations of historic grandeur.”

It would be a fascinating but fruitless speculation to ask why a man of the intellect of Gladstone should be attracted by the ideals of the Church, when men like Shelley, Byron, Voltaire and Huxley should have been equally repelled by those same ideals.

I have already insisted that Morley is fully cognisant of the fact that an underlying unity constituted the mind of Gladstone, it was this that made him able to look at the world as a whole, it was this which enabled him to distinguish between that which was temporary and unimportant (though at the time it might appear important to his contemporaries) and that which was permanent. It was this which probably attracted Gladstone to the Church, in this he saw an institution which however men might attack it continued and though it seemed often to have the death rattle survived and continued living.

And further Morley tells us that to Gladstone "all his activities were in his own mind one." The more ordinary man never seems to realise that all activity if it is the activity of a sensible person towards a sensible end must be one, in other words, life is not a succession of important events followed by unimportant events, it is a "something" that is an ordered experience with surely a purpose. The man who empties a dustbin may be doing quite as an important piece of work in his own way as the Prime Minister who introduces a remarkable bill that shall sound the great ideals of liberty and restraint, to see life as an ordered progression (as Gladstone did) is to make it something grand

even if from a worldly point of view it is passed in obscurity, it is a grand thing if it consists in packing chocolates year in year out, it is a grand thing if it means year in year out touring with a second rate theatrical company to play to second rate audiences for second rate managers. And further (what is most significant of all) this attitude to life makes for true religion because it makes life as it should be a holy thing and not as it seems to be for so many people merely a miserable existence.

So Morley, keeping before him this attribute of Gladstone that made him look at things as *one* ; writes of his position in that most peculiar and in many ways impotent game of chess, politics.

“ All his activities were in his own mind one.

This we can hardly repeat too often, is the fundamental fact of Mr Gladstone's history. Political life was only part of his religious life. It was religion that prompted his literary life. It was religious motive that, through a thousand avenues and channels stirred him and guided him in his whole conception of active social duty. The liberalism of the continent at this epoch was in its essence either hostile to Christianity or else it was indifferent. In England too, the most that can be said of the leading breed of the political reformers is that they were theists and not all of them were even so much as theists. If liberalism had continued to run in the grooves cut by Bentham, James Mill and the rest Mr Gladstone would never have grown to be a liberal. He was not

only a fervid practising Christian : he was a Christian steeped in the fourth century, steeped in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."

Before we pass on to consider some of the actual events in which Gladstone played such a prominent part we must pause and discover what Morley has to say of that remarkable life-long enthusiasm Gladstone had for Danté. It is a strange fact how nearly everyone has a life-long enthusiasm for something ; something which all through their lives seems to always peep out just when it is almost thought it had been forgotten, the soldier who never loses the love letter written to him when he left England, the old rector disappointed that after fifty years his Church is emptier than when he came, secluding himself in his study to read of Tom Brown, sad, that his headmaster would never again come out of the chapel door and then finding the holiness of sorrow before the altar, the grey-haired man of the world never looking at the stained copy of Red Riding Hood without a vague regret. So Gladstone through his long life of political warfare kept to a love of Danté. Thus writes Morley :

" It was in Danté—active politician and thinker as well as poet—that he found this unity of thought and coherence of life, not only illuminated by a sublime imagination but directly associated with theology, philosophy, politics, history, sentiment, duty."

In dealing with the extraordinary Gladstonian policy when he supported the bill that did away with the Jewish disabilities; Morley says with a great show of admiration "the test case of toleration at the moment of the Oxford election of 1847 was the admission of the Jews to sit in Parliament." Very likely this *was* a case of courage on the part of Gladstone we do not dispute this, but Morley doesn't seem to see that in many cases toleration is a most dangerous quality. It is very often merely a cloak to cover cowardice, very often it is the result of a mind that is too lazy to protest, in this particular instance Gladstone wished that Parliament should not be the monopoly of only those who were Christian. Gladstone made the biggest mistake here of his political career. We are not in any way anti-Jewish, we have in no way supported Belloc in his childish hatred of that people. But why should they be in an English Parliament, why are we to have Jews, is it because they have long purses or long noses, is it because they have the brains we do not possess? Why should we not have then Chinamen in Parliament telling us to eat bird's eggs and torture prisoners, why should we not have Germans telling us how to prepare for war by accepting the hospitality of the nation we are going to fight, why not have Frenchmen in Parliament to govern the colony that exists in the poorer parts of Bloomsbury and Soho, why not have some Negroes to tell us how they would like to see the Tottenham Court Road governed? The Jews are not wanted in our Parliament and

Gladstone we think made a great mistake by his act of toleration. No doubt as Morley says the attitude of Gladstone to the Jewish bill *was* one of "moral courage" but it was also one of extreme folly.

It will not be out of place at this moment to see Mr Gladstone just before he became Prime Minister with regard to his attitude to Ireland. Thus, Morley after commenting on the fact how wrong those people are who ascribe to Gladstone a wish for a popular government, goes on to say that in regard to Ireland, Gladstone while knowing that his bills *looked* like being dangerous was able to point out how often the constitution had seemed to be about to be ruined by enterprising and daring statesmen and how it had survived. The constitution is not a thing that can be destroyed, it can be changed and yet (as Morley demonstrates so well; Burke *could* not see) continue strong and healthy. So Morley writes of Gladstone with the question of Ireland and all that it has meant in the popular estimation of him :

"No minister that ever lived toiled more sedulously in office and out of office to avert the curse of popular government. The main staple of his discourse was naturally the Irish case and though within the next twenty years he acquired a wider familiarity with detail, he never exhibited the large features of that case with more cogent or persuasive mastery."

I must reluctantly pass on over many episodes in the life of Gladstone that Morley has much to

say about. It is the purpose of this study to concentrate on Morley not so much as a biographer but as a writer of the studies of famous men upon which his fame rests. The essence then of this biography of Gladstone has already been reached ; it is that part which deals with the underlying fundamental of the character of Gladstone. I have said that it was that Morley discovered that there was in his character a unity which made him able to see beyond the petty worry of the moment, which made him above the inevitable disappointments of a political life able to see that it must be a career of dark and fair days but that the predominating note was "fairness." Morley has brought out with one fine example, the enthusiasm of Gladstone for the "something" which seems to pervade every life, in *his* case the love of Danté, he has gone further and discovered that perhaps the word that meant everything to Gladstone was religion.

I do not think it is necessary or profitable to attempt to follow the biography Morley has written in any detail, it is of its kind a masterpiece. Morley was present when Gladstone died, well then might he feel that he of all men was fit to write such a life, a life that demonstrates what a man can do and what is more important what he cannot. Morley shall end this chapter in his own words and it shall be of the passing of Mr Gladstone.

"When May opened it was evident that the end was drawing near. On the 13th he was allowed to receive visits of farewell from Lord

Rosebery and from myself, the last persons beyond his household to see him. He was hardly conscious. On the early morning of the 19th, his family all kneeling around the bed on which he lay in the stupor of coming death, without a struggle he ceased to breathe. Nature outside—wood and wide lawn and cloudless far off sky—shone at her fairest."

Chapter Four

CONCERNING ROUSSEAU

IN a very admirable and lengthy discussion on the power of the written Word, Mr Belloc treats of the question of how far Rousseau by his writings, in particular the "Contrat Social" influenced events in France that led to the Revolution. Leaving on one side this particular discussion as to the influence of the Word, it is not out of place or unprofitable when dealing with a great writer like Morley to discuss the general influence of the Word on the conduct of human affairs. It is the word that makes wars, it is the word that makes men believe or disbelieve (very largely) in Religion, it is the word written or spoken that makes men sad, or gay, or despair or hope. In dealing with Rousseau we are dealing with a man whose claim to distinction entirely lies in the direction of the written Word, he did not have any very outstanding epochs (except to himself) in his life, his fame rested on his writings, his misery rested on his writings, his writings earned him the admiration of kings and philosophers at one end and the hatred of the superficial orthodox at the other. Morley in his study of Rousseau is at his happiest, there is none of the rather heavy

going that we feel in certain of his books, his study is better in some ways than his companion book on Voltaire, and it is probably because Morley has more sympathy with Rousseau, Rousseau with his strange love of women, his hatred of society, his curious religious vacillations, his peculiar love for a gawk of a girl who was for so many years as wife to him.

I propose in this chapter as far as possible to follow the order of Morley's book with a view to seeing what he considers was the strength of Rousseau, what he considers was his weakness, how far his writings may be said to be mischievous, how far they may be said to be useful. I shall deal with some of the peculiar traits in his character, his relations with women, his love of music, and his subsequently miserable and mysterious death.

I have already said that Belloc has a lengthy discussion on the part the writings of Rousseau played in igniting the French Revolution, it is enough to say briefly that Belloc is of the opinion that the "*Contrat Social*" was a considerable impetus to the start of the Revolution for in it was contained a germ of political reasoning that gave rise to thoughts that ultimately culminated in the French Revolution. Therefore on this point it is of interest to ask what Morley has to say, for of Belloc and Morley there could scarcely be a greater difference in historical and political outlook. Morley sees at once that the times of Rousseau were those in which the word Revolutionary played a prominent part whether in thought, religion or

politics and of the thinkers of the time Rousseau Voltaire and Diderot, Rousseau was the most revolutionary, at least in politics. Thus of the question of his influence in the time immediately preceding the Revolution Morley writes brilliantly realising the background of the time.

“ It was his work more than that of any other one man, that France arose from the deadly decay which had laid hold of her whole social and political system, and found that irresistible energy which warded off dissolution within and partition from without. We shall see further that besides being the first immediately revolutionary thinker in politics, he was the most stirring of reactionists in religion.”

For it must be remembered that the French Revolution was very largely a movement of reaction, reaction from a hateful cruel ecclesiastical tyranny and a less *cruel* but perhaps more *severe* tyranny from the direction of the monarchy. It is reaction and not always vision that is the precursor of revolution. If in Russia to-day Bolshevism had the vision of liberty, reaction against the odious rule of the Tsars was an equally potent factor in its promulgation.

And further Rousseau not only influenced “ Robespierre and Paine, but Chateaubriand, not only Jacobinism but the Catholicism of the Restoration. Thus he did more than anyone else at once to give direction to the first episodes of revolution, and force to the first episodes of reaction.”

Before turning to the particular, the relations of Rousseau with women, the fact must be faced that broadly speaking women do not seem to be very helpful to literary men. This is probably accounted for by the fact that for some strange reason constancy and literature do not seem to always walk hand in hand ; on the other hand women who have to do with literary men in any intimate way seem to be so far inferior to them that misunderstandings and complications are apt to arise. We have only to look at a few outstanding figures in Literature to realise that it is an undoubted fact (though a melancholy one) that the women-kind of literary giants have not played a too distinguished part but more from inaptitude than from vice or malice.

To wit Swift never able to quite make up his mind about Stella or Vanessa, Byron the husband of a backbiting detestable woman, Shelley always unlucky in his choice, Milton married to an inane woman, Thackeray to have a wife but her home an asylum, Dickens not on the sweetest of matrimonial terms. Women at present have not learnt how to understand a man who writes, they may sigh for a better world, they may pour contempt on a world that is very largely masculine, but they have at present not the remotest idea of being really harmonious to those who write. And it is the same with Rousseau, Morley has some very wise remarks to make on the question of Rousseau and his queer liking for women inferior to him in every way. Morley writes with ready understanding upon this sore question.

He sees that Rousseau had not in regard to women the pleasantest qualities, qualities that could have had no suggestion about them, he seemed to vacillate between a violent passion and a sort of half-hearted sickliness. "There is a certain close and sickly air around all his dealings with women and all his feeling for them. We seem to move not in the star like radiance of love, not even in the fiery flames of lust, but among the humid heats of some unknown abode of things not wholesome or manly." It is perilously near saying that Rousseau was a thoroughly corrupt and unpleasant person but Morley saves the situation by remarking that this trait of Rousseau was due to his mental outlook, but if so in other matters he appeared to be remarkably sane.

With the question of Madame de Warens Morley makes a very extraordinary and I think painful statement, it is a suggestion that to rely on making amends after death is not only rather a fragile fragment of morality but seems to have no real reason or rational thought behind it. It is a piece of real melancholy, for is there in life really anything so depressing as to imagine that the grave is the end of all? If we so think well may the Thames welcome us, well may we drink to excess every night, well may we eat, drink and be sad for in truth then to-morrow we die, to rise no more.

Rousseau deeply sorrowful for the loss of Madame de Warens permits himself the hope that in a future life he will see her again. So Morley perhaps wishing to drive home a moral or is it because of a want of faith himself? (I think the

latter) writes " Yet would not men be more likely to have a deeper love for those about them and a keener dread of filling a house with aching hearts, if they courageously realised from the beginning of their days that we have none of this perfect companionable bliss to promise ourselves in other worlds, that the black and horrible grave is indeed the end of our communion and that we know one another no more." Morley has never penned such mischievous words, if the grave *is* the end of all then life is a horrid blasphemy for there is not even hope, if the grave *is* the end of all what matter whether a man loves or hates ; what matter it whether he murders or gives his own body to be burned, what matter how we live our life if the end is but the grave. There is much that is pure nonsense in the hymns of the Christian Church and though the suggestion contained in an Easter Hymn of the meeting of the body and soul on the Resurrection Morning may be but worthless imagery, yet it is a better thought than that the grave is the end that we are but dust that not only does the body die but that with it is the finish of all and we are not Temples of the Holy Ghost. We can but hope that Morley was mistaken, that he has found that if there is a death there is also a life, " for except a seed die it cannot live."

Yet we can but hope that Morley wrote these words in one of those moods that at times seem to strike all mankind and more especially those who write books. For indeed the man who writes books must perforce spend many hours alone, when

the busy rush of the world passes carelessly by him, when only the scratching of his pen breaks the silence, when outside the neighbouring clock on the old Church strikes the passing hours with solemn note, when the night has nearly turned to morning, then may the writer well pause and ask himself is it well with the soul? to where shall I pass when my pen has ceased to write, where indeed is the other side of the grave, is there another side? So Morley in an evident fit of depression penned these words that seem to suggest that of another life hope is so slender as to be almost absent.

Perhaps almost more than any man Rousseau held his fate in the hand that wielded his pen, it brought him fame, it brought him intercourse with kings, princes and philosophers, it also brought him persecution and abject misery. I must now turn to the most important part of this chapter which is to deal with what Morley has to say of the queer, wonderful and yet perhaps mischievous (in some ways) writings of Rousseau.

In the first place I will look at his famous Discourses and in particular that one which dealt with the equality of man that doctrine which however we might wish that it should be true is obviously false. For men are not equal even if we look upon them entirely apart from their possessions, they are not equal as regards intellect, or morality or (what is far less important) position in life. For though perhaps in an ideal state the coster might be equal to the Cardinal; in this imperfect world he is not, at least if he is then his

equality is strangely recognised. It is only in death that all men are equal, it is only then that the oneness of humanity is proven.

This discourse on the equality of man was very largely a protest against the existing civilisation, it is nearly always the actual state of things a man *sees* that makes him promulgate a doctrine. And Morley, commenting on this second discourse, does see that though it was of importance it was really more a temporary document than anything else. "Nothing that Rousseau had to say about the state of nature was seriously meant for scientific exposition, any more than the Sermon on the Mount was meant for political economy. The importance of the Discourse on Inequality lay in its vehement denunciation of the existing social state." Further ; on the equality of man to which I have referred Morley has some trenchant remarks to make which must be quoted at some length for they do show a very strongly marked side of him, for it is only by his opinions that we can get at the mind of a man whether he be a great writer or a very insignificant sweep.

So he writes evidently a little angry at the nonsense that is talked and written about equality from well meaning bishops to ill meaning street corner orators.

"An immense quantity of nonsense has been talked about the equality of man, for which those who deny that doctrine and those who assert it may divide the responsibility. It is really true or false, according to the doctrines with which it is confronted. What Rousseau's

Discourse meant, what he intended it to mean and what his direct disciples understood it as meaning is not that all men are born equal. He never says this and his recognition of natural inequality implies the contrary proposition. His position is that the artificial differences, springing from the conditions of the social union, do not coincide with the differences in capacity springing from original constitution; that the tendency of the social union as now organised is to deepen the artificial inequalities and make the gulf between those endowed with privileges and wealth and those not so endowed ever wider and wider. It would have been very difficult a hundred years ago to deny the truth of this way of stating the case. If it has to some extent already ceased to be entirely true and if violent popular forces are at work making it less and less true, we owe the origin of the change among other causes and influences, not least to the influence of Rousseau himself and those whom he inspired. It was that influence which, though it certainly did not produce yet did as certainly give a deep and remarkable bias, first to the American Revolution and a dozen years afterwards to the French Revolution."

Though it may be that no one thing produced the French Revolution I think that it is no exaggeration to say that Rousseau gave more than "a deep and remarkable bias to that revolution," at least this is the opinion of Belloc, easily the

most profound student of that vast conflagration though he thinks that the "Contrat Social" had the greatest influence.

Let us then turn at once to the "Contrat Social" by which Rousseau so influenced affairs in France that led to the end of the French Crown but even so has not yet taught men that tyranny whether of word or deed is not a thing without end, to wit the fall of the Caesars, the fall of the head of Charles (a tyrant ; though some see in him a martyr), the fall of the Tzar in Russia in our own day.

It will be remembered that the central position which Morley brings out so skilfully of the Discourses was that civilisation had accentuated the inequality among men, in other words it had imposed a burden upon man. In the "Contrat Social" Morley is aware that in some respects Rousseau abandoned some of his positions yet he kept to his Central Doctrine that "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains." But Morley at once sees with irresistible logic how utterly fallacious is this reasoning for he asks with a certain show of scorn "How is a man born free ? If he is born into isolation, he perishes instantly. If he is born into a family, he is at the moment of his birth committed to a state of social relation, in however rudimentary a form ; and the more or less of freedom which this state may ultimately permit to him, depends upon circumstances. Man was hardly born free among the Romans and the Athenians when both law and public opinion left a father at perfect liberty to expose his new born

infant. A child was not born free in the early days of the Roman State, when the "*patria potestas*" was a reality. Nor, to go further back, was he born free in the times of the Hebrew patriarchs when Abraham had full right of sacrificing his son and Jephthah of sacrificing his daughter." Rousseau then as Morley points out, made the fundamental mistake of mixing up being born free to live a life in liberty and peace to an elemental right of being free from all responsibilities whether to the family or state. But with a people suffering under a frightful tyranny of Church and Monarch as the French did prior to the Revolution, such dictates as the suggestion that man is born free would not be exposed to the judgment of history but would seem but the climax of what vaguely was shaping in their minds, that political theory that made a people cognisant of the fact that it should be part of the ruler as well as part of the ruled. So though in the light of research we see, as Morley does, how wrong Rousseau was in his idea of the Freedom of Birth of man, yet we see equally well how at the moment of its publication the "*Contrat Social*" must have been a match that set fire to a large part of the train that ultimately burst into the French Revolution.

I must now turn to "*Emilius*" that work of Rousseau which was perhaps his most brilliant performance as well as his most controversial in the reception it received. At least Rousseau never suffered that most irritating of humiliations to an author, to be ignored and his books passed by as though they did not exist. Such is the fate of

many excellent books to-day because very largely the press is too busy to worry with books published by authors who are not very well known.

But this is not the only reason, big names are likely to receive (and I think this is right) preferential treatment, because however much it may be denied, it is in literature (and I am now speaking very broadly and including fiction) more true than in perhaps any other calling that merit and merit alone produces recognition. Any man or woman who can write books that claim the attention of the critics of the great newspapers may be said to be in the category of those favoured souls who bear in front of their names the word "distinguished." And this digression merely gently leads me back once more to the fact that Rousseau never wrote a line that did not bring him either hatred or affection. Of "Emilius" Morley shall discuss its merits and its demerits.

It is of course an elaborate treatise on education.

"The sum of the merits of "Emilius" as a writing upon education is not to be lightly counted. Its value lies, as has been said of the New Helöisa, in the spirit which animates it and communicates itself with vivid force to the reader. It is one of the seminal books in the history of literature, and of such books the worth resides less in the parts than in the whole. It touched the deeper things of character. It filled parents with a sense of the dignity and moment of their task."

If then it only did this it did untold value, it

would still do untold value if such could be its mission to-day, when very largely education consists in sending boys to a public school that they may know how to kick a football, strike a cricket ball, and be made into gentlemen who are little short of snobs, while girls are sent to high schools to learn to play three or four pieces of music to inflict misery on those who have to hear them, to be taught by sour looking headmistresses whose interest lies in Cato and Vergil when it should lie in babies.

Yet further :

“ In fine we may add that “ *Emilius* ” was the first expression of that democratic tendency in education, which political and other circumstances gradually made general alike in England, France and Germany ; a tendency, that is to look on education as a process concerning others besides the rich and the well born. As has often been remarked Ascham, Milton, Locke, Fenelon, busy themselves about the instruction of young gentlemen and gentlewomen. The rest of the world are supposed to be sufficiently provided for by the education of circumstances. Since the middle of the eighteenth century this monopolising conception has vanished, along with and through the same general agencies as the corresponding conception of social monopoly. Rousseau enforced the production of a natural and self-sufficing man as the object of education and showed, or did his best to show, the infinite capacity of the young for that simple and natural cultivation.”

Thus it is indeed obvious that to Morley this work "Emilius" was the greatest achievement of Rousseau.

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I have already said that all men seem to have in their lives some interest totally apart from their life's work. I quoted Gladstone with his life-long zest for Dante. Imagination conceives a dustman always madly zealous for stamp collecting, or an actor always full of zeal for learning about China ; so we find Rousseau all his life absorbed in music a thing, perhaps as far from political and educational treatises as there well might be.

His was very largely a protest against the abominable French Music of the time but he had also a scheme of a new notation. Again, as Morley sees, his aim was the same, as it had been in "Emilius" that the common people might be given the privilege of education, so he wished that the power of understanding music might be brought within reach of the greatest number of the people. "The aim of the scheme, let us say, to begin with, was at once practical and popular ; to reduce the difficulty of learning music to the lowest possible point and so to bring the most delightful of the arts within the reach of the largest possible number of people."

And so reluctantly I must come to the end of the life of Rousseau. Perhaps in history nothing is so miserable as the melancholy end of a great man. Let us indeed weep as we read of the hateful

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few years of agony and idiocy that led Swift to the grave, let us be miserable at the disgraceful fate of Oscar Wilde the pet of all the charlatans and buffoons of Society, dying in a miserable garret in Paris, let us on the other hand perhaps be joyful that the sea claimed the body of Shelley, let us again be distraught that Chatterton should starve to death in a garret while outside the unimaginative rich wretches passed uncaring for genius or beauty, let us once more be indeed wretched at the end of Rousseau, the end of the great writer who induced a revolution, who suffered persecution, who dined at royal tables. Into the question of his suicide we do not propose to go beyond saying that against many other opinions Morley holds that the theory that Rousseau ended his life with a pistol shot is not an exaggerated one. We shall not know, we only know that in misery and neglect Rousseau passed out of sight but not out of memory.

Possibly Morley has really written his best book on Rousseau, although he has brought out the central fact that all the teaching and ideals of Rousseau lay in the wish to make things better for the people. Morley with his accustomed skill always gets at the kernel of the man he is studying, the love of Burke for Order, the hatred of Voltaire for anything based on an arbitrary assumption of authority, the unity of the mind of Gladstone and the democratic ideals of Rousseau.

Chapter Five

DIDEROT

IN a preface to his work on Diderot, Morley remarking that he has written more fully on Diderot than on either Voltaire or Rousseau gives the reason for this, that any educated man or woman knows a good deal about the two latter. I have no wish to be unduly pessimistic, I do not agree entirely with those "able" platform speakers who say that the only things the masses read are the Sunday newspapers, but I am convinced that Morley had no idea how terribly ignorant we are as a nation on the great pre-revolution French Writers.

To many thousands, nay millions of educated men and women in this country the names of Rousseau and Voltaire are nothing more than names, ask any ordinary cavalry officer what did Voltaire attack the Church about and he will look at you with a sort of contempt and ask you to have a sherry and bitters in the ante-room, ask him of Rousseau and he will vaguely wonder if he had anything to do with the compiling of the King's Regulations, ask any man who spends a good deal of his time not a mile from the Bank of England why Rousseau did so much to make

education not a monopoly of the rich and he will probably suggest that it would be far better if you didn't waste your time reading of such people when Rubber Markets are booming. Or again ask any ordinary woman (I mean those who stroll down our suburban streets by the hundred) whether Voltaire really in the least understood Hamlet, or Rousseau the fundamentals of equality and she will ask you whether they lived in the time of Aristotle or was it sometime in France during the last two thousand years? Narrowing down the educated people to university students I do not think that even then Morley would now find any very large acquaintance with the works of Voltaire and Rousseau. And I most certainly am sure Morley is right when he remarks that Diderot is not at all familiar to English people, but at the same time I believe that the ordinary educated Englishman hardly knows of Rousseau and Voltaire more than as vague names which do not mean anything definite.

The neglect of any teaching of continental history in any large degree is perfectly shameful, yet we have the impertinence to imagine that we are the best people to rule two-thirds of the world when we never attempt to make education such that we shall have any chance of understanding foreign nations and their characteristics.

I believe that many wars might have been averted had the nations known of the history of other nations, it is the little irritations made by blundering politicians that cause war, they are very largely due to the fact that politicians as a

whole know nothing of the whims of the *other* nation, whims dug out of the bedrock of centuries of history, whims which seem absurd to the other nation because it had not learnt of their true significance. If only we had studied the history of Germany we should have seen that to treat them as friends was absurd, if we had made men, soldiers while there was *peace*, while the infamous Kaiser was riding behind the coffin of King Edward, we should not have needed in 1914 to make civilians soldiers, but Germany would have known that it dare not make war. And all this is because we don't learn the history of other nations, because our public school headmasters cannot see beyond Caesar's Civil War and the machinations of Pompey. It is then indeed a great debt that men and women owe to Morley who in his studies of Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot has given us an insight of the period in France when the pen set a people thinking so that it smashed a tyrannous ecclesiastical system and threw down a monstrous and unholy monarchy. At once without further ado, we must turn to our particular task to learn something of the importance of Diderot and how this appears to Morley.

In these days when authors turn out two or three books a year we can scarcely conceive of a work occupying a writer such a vast period as twenty years. We live in an age of speed, we despise anything that does not move in a hurry, we must have the fastest cars, we must have the swiftest trains and ships, we must have our news in the quickest possible manner, we expect our

popular comedies to move with a rapidity lest we have to sit and listen to what we call "slow stuff," we must have our children educated at top speed, we must even be hurried to the grave by a motor hearse, horses are too slow. No doubt then that we can hardly imagine Diderot writing twenty years to produce his "Encyclopedia" and Morley himself though really an apostle of quite a different age to our own, realises the immensity of the task for he says with an apt application of parallelism "They (the thirty-five volumes of the Encyclopedia) required a laboriousness as steady and as prolonged, a fortitude as patient, unvarying and unshaken, as men accustomed to applaud in the engineer some vast and difficult work, or the commander who directs a hardy and dangerous expedition."

There has always been a certain school of philosophy which has been attracted by the attempt to look upon all the sum of knowledge as an entity, as though knowledge were a thing of a certain limit, as though if we could draw an imaginary rope round the universe all knowledge would be contained within the line constituting the circle. Of the reasonableness of this idea I have not the space to go into here, I mention it, as it is obvious that such a view of the universe may be the one to induce the writing of an Encyclopedia. It is the aim of philosophy to attempt to explain one thing in relation to another, to show that contradictories do not really exist in the universe, to show that there is in a multiplicity a unity, it is the aim of philosophy to *prove*

this ; not to allow it on the authority of either revealed Religion or the premise that all is summed up in a Personal God of whom nothing really seems to be known. The ideal of Diderot was no doubt to get at "the idea that human knowledge is a totality."

Morley in a most admirable survey of the contents of the "Encyclopedia" of Diderot points out unmistakably the weakness that in a sense was also found in Voltaire, that is Diderot was dealing with things and abuses of the moment in so doing he was likely to forget that philosophy does not deal with the thing of the moment, it tries rather to piece together and get at the unity behind, or rather essence, because there is in everything the "essence" whether it be of a philosophical system, God, a table or a dish of apples. For instance take the articles on agriculture, Morley writes "they were admirable for the fulness and precision with which they exposed the actual state of France" no doubt Morley is right, these articles were admirable, but Diderot was attempting to get at knowledge as a totality, the essential then in the case of agriculture would have been the attempt to get at what might be the essential of agriculture not a survey (however admirable) of the state of the industry in France at the particular time. In his studies of Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot, Morley continually makes it apparent these great writers (and in a more limited sense philosophers) were so obsessed with the *actual* times in which they lived that valuable as much of their work was and is, yet it sometimes

failed to look at questions from an abstract point of view, because an attempt to frame a philosophical system must be as free as possible from being merely an attack upon the abuses of the moment or a too enthusiastic attempt at a topical reformation.

It is not to be forgotten as Morley indicates, how large a part of the *Encyclopedia* is concerned with the question of religion. Morley sees how misrepresented Diderot has been; "we are always told that the aim of its conductors was to preach dogmatic atheism. Such a statement could not be made by anyone who had read the theological articles, whether the more or the less important among them. Whether Diderot had himself advanced to the dogma of atheism at this time or not it is certain that the *Encyclopedia* represents only the phase of rationalistic scepticism. The religious attack was prompted and guided by the same social feeling that inspired the economic articles." It is once again the thing of the moment that Diderot attacks, the "priest, the patron of indolence, the hater of knowledge, the mutineer against the civil laws, the unprofitable devourer of the national substance, the persecutor."

Morley makes it perfectly apparent that Diderot hated Christianity for he quotes a letter written by Diderot in which he says "The Christian religion is to my mind the most absurd and atrocious in its dogmas, the most unintelligible, the most metaphysical the most intertwined and obscure and consequently the most subject to divisions, sects, schisms, heresies, the most mis-

chievous for the public tranquillity, the most dangerous to sovereigns by its hierarchic order, its persecutions, its discipline, the most flat, the most dreary, the most Gothic and the most gloomy in its ceremonies, the most puerile and unsociable in its morality, considered not in what is common to it with universal morality but in what is peculiarly its own, and constitutes it evangelical, apostolical and Christian morality, which is the most intolerant of all." And this was not written by a madman as Nietzsche was, it was written by a genius, yet we must admit that probably the gross excesses of the then Sacerdotalism had much influence in forming his attack on Christianity.

Regarding the quotation of Diderot Morley remarks with gentle irony, "We need not discuss or extend the quotation." Does Morley then agree with Diderot? It is impossible to say.

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So to sum up of the "Encyclopedia" of Diderot what does Morley think? He is a little sad that the work which might have done so much failed very largely. "We constantly feel how near Diderot is to the point of view that would have brought light. We feel how very nearly ready he was to see the mental experiences of the race in the east and west, not as superstition, degradation, grovelling error, but as aspects of intellectual effort and aspiration richly worthy of human interest and scientific consideration and in their aim as well as in their substance all of one piece with the newest science and the last voices of religious or

anti-religious development. Diderot was the one member of the philosophers who was capable of grasping such a thought. If this idea of the guiding unity of the intellectual history of man and the organic integrity of thought, had happily come into Diderot's mind we should have had an Encyclopedia indeed, a survey and representation of all the questions and answers of the world, such as would have suggested what questions are best worth putting and at the same time have furnished its own answers." As I have said then Diderot failed in his interest in the things of his own time; to look for that *unity* behind the universe which philosophy knows is its business to discover.

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We now come to one of the most interesting of Morley's many discussions, it is that dealing with Diderot and the Stage. Morley has a grip of the characters of Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot that no other writer has or has had. He has had to deal with a very difficult period of history, the period really of "the literary preparation for the French Revolution." It would have been very easy for him to have made his books on these three great people extremely dull, this error Morley has avoided. He has the good sense to always attempt to intersperse the difficult writings of these three with notes about their personal life. With marked success was this apparent in the study of Rousseau. Not quite so apparent was it

in the study of Voltaire. In the present work on Diderot Morley has a perfect genius for helping us through the rather tedious parts of the "Encyclopedia," with the promise of a genial picture of the social life of Diderot. We are enabled to see him, the kindly man, ever willing to help those less fortunate, ever ready to lend his pen to write for this, that and the other. Then when we had almost forgotten we were reading a learned study, we are brought back gently to think of the Stage in the late eighteenth century and to think of Diderot and his connection with it.

There is hardly any form of activity which is so interesting as the drama, very largely the life of a nation is portrayed in its drama. This is I think seen to-day. The drama to-day is very largely effeminate, it is very largely a picture of the widespread interest there is in sex and the sordid side of it. Many of our best playwrights (and their great talents are undoubted) seem to expend their energy on writing unpleasant plays about extremely unpleasant and worthless people. On the other hand there are playwrights who write romantic plays that are as pure as the air on a Scotch mountain. The drama should undoubtedly be something to show life as a pleasing thing, humanity as something worthy of affection, it should show that love is a noble thing, that beauty is permanent, that greed is temporary. Cynicism is one of the curses of this age, why should we have plays showing that the life of a prostitute is not so bad after all, why are we to be treated to plays dealing with the mud of Mayfair and the

filth of the "better" parts of New York, why are we to have nearly every week some play depicting the type of woman to whom fidelity is an unknown quantity? It is not because playwrights *like* this kind of thing, it is because the national interest to-day is in sex, divorce, smart and unwholesome society and the reflection finds life in our drama. To what use did Diderot consider the drama should be put? Morley shall supply the answer.

"His whole theory of the drama was a glorification of private virtue and domestic life." Without being unduly cynical we are rather forced to the conclusion to-day, that the drama is a glorification of private vice and the nasty disharmonies of domestic life. And Diderot treated of the theatre in a philosophical way, he allowed this to go so far that he hardly allowed of any stage tricks at all. This as Morley sees led to some rather dull work.

"Diderot, repudiating the conventions of dramatic art and consulting nature or reality, saw that there are many scenes in life in which it is more natural to the personages of the scene to move than to speak in which indeed motion is natural and speech is altogether unnatural. If this be so in real life, he said, it should be so on the stage, because nothing passes in the world which may not pass also in the theatre and as pantomime or expression of emotion, feeling, purpose, otherwise than by speech, has so much to do in life

the dramatist should make abundant use of pantomime in composing stage plays." And of this position Morley (who did not very much understand the theatre) remarks "nobody would now dispute the wisdom of Diderot as to the part that pantomime fills in the highest kind of dramatic representation." It is not so, the most successful plays are those that do *not* rely on pantomime, but more largely on dialogue and character study."

About the time that Diderot was writing for the theatre we get an interesting sidelight on some of the quaint antics of the man, it is one of those light touches I have already referred to, which prevents Morley from ever becoming dull or wearisome.

"Diderot used to go to the highest seats in the house, thrust his fingers into his ears and then to the astonishment of his neighbours watch the performance with the sharpest interest. As a constant playgoer, he knew the words of the plays by heart and what he sought was to isolate the gesture of the performers and to enjoy and criticise that by himself. The people around him were more and more amazed as they saw him, notwithstanding his stopped ears shed copious tears in the pathetic passages."

Out of this Morley draws a rather obvious moral; which as I have hinted at before, proves

that he does not understand the theatre much for he says "this was an odd and whimsical way of acting on a conviction that language is a very poor misleading and utterly inadequate instrument for representing what it professes." Morley is in error, speech is the most important thing in the theatre, it is the only instrument that never seems to be out of place.

I have but opportunity to mention one more activity that Diderot undertook, out of the enormous mass of material that Morley provides ; it shall be the work of Diderot on the great contemporary of St. Paul, Seneca.

Seneca with his disgust at the excesses of Nero must have appealed to a mind like that of Diderot, a mind that also hated the excesses and anomalies of his own time. "It was" says Morley "Horace, Terence, Lucretius, Tacitus Seneca, who to the very end came closer to him than any of the Greeks. The moralising reflection, the satirical tendency, the declamatory form of the Romans, all had an irresistible attraction for him. But Diderot was not the man to admire by halves, and to literary praise of Seneca's writings he added a thorough going vindication of his career."

A position that Diderot always hovered near to was that one which says that there is never an absolute degree of right or wrong ; using this position Diderot could well support Seneca when others might (and have) condemned him for a too slow resolve to leave the court of Nero. But as Morley tells us, with true Logic, Diderot exclaims "nobody blames Fenelon or Bossuet for remaining

at the court of Louis the Fourteenth in its days of licence."

Morley himself sees the difficulty that Seneca was placed in "for unhappily he was not only a statesman, but a moralist" and continues Morley doubtless looking round on contemporary politicians "the two characters are always hard to reconcile, as perhaps any parliamentary candidate might tell us."

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It is quite impossible to over estimate the value of these books of Morley on the three French writers we have been considering. Morley has a most exhaustive way of looking at a subject, he does not though at the same time spend too much time on trifles (as perhaps Liddon did when writing his biography of Pusey), he teaches us that alas in so many writers their written opinions do not always fall in with their manner of life. Of the three studies of Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot, no student who wishes to understand the background of the Revolution in France can ignore them. Yet the books are written with such an easy freedom that they deserve to be far more widely read than they are, we do not recommend them for a short journey in a train, we do not recommend them for light reading for half an hour after lunch, but they might be read when the long winter evenings drive us to the fireside, when the wind blows down the street as though it were a scythe, then these three works might be indeed

profitably consumed. And if we are searching for a permanent record of Morley we may take down from the bookshelves these three studies (they must not be *too* dusty) and there we can say "Si Monumentum Requiris circumspice."

Chapter Six

OF WALPOLE

PERHAPS it does not often occur to us how few in each century are the names of men or women of that importance that hundreds of years after we still talk and read about them. It is on the one hand a melancholy thought, where, we say in well nigh accents of despair are the millions upon millions that have lived in every century, where are they who must have walked these very streets our uncertain footsteps now pursue, where are they who must have loved, have hated, have hoped, have despaired, where are they who to themselves must have appeared as of enormous importance, where are they who have for centuries gone before, unknown, forgotten, as sand swept by the coming tide, as clouds driven by the scudding blast, as an army driven ever onwards and onwards with none to know whither? Useless speculation to ask, useless to ask *why* these countless lives that have been lived and are gone before we are aware of their existence, useless speculation to ask *why* they do not appear to return. Yet on the other hand, does not this thought suggest, there is something to come, this world is but a passing phase,

this world with all its glory and pomp and folly is but a stepping stone and on its stones but few gain the distinction of being written as names that perish not. Yet in every century there are those who are not effaced by time, those who have overthrown kings by the stroke of battle and the stroke of a pen, those who have written and put an end to tyranny and those also who have set a tyranny up, those who have wielded great power in the government of the country. Of the latter Walpole, though he may not have been in the true sense great, stands out. It is in this chapter our task to look at the turning points of the famous politician's life, it is our task to allow Morley to help us with it. For Morley of all men by his literary and political gifts is fitted to write of a politician who carried on an unbroken rule for many years, when he had enemies on the right, enemies on the left, when a queen who ruled was long dead before she died, when a king hated his son as though he were an assassin, when England was in the grip of what men call (with but scant understanding) the dull century.

Yet what is it that makes for a lively century, to the unthinking it is that which is full of wars, full of days when death stalks about and pounces upon men long before their appointed time, to the more thoughtful it will be that century that produces great books, great poems, great discoveries, new truths about God, to the unthinking action seems synonymous with that which is not dull, to those who think, is borne in upon them as though with Divine Breath the thought that it

is repose that is free from dullness. In our present century we entirely lack repose, we can find no enjoyment except in that which is made by artificial means, how many people as they walk down Piccadilly every night, ever glance at the stars, rather they hurry that the gay and yet melancholy crowded restaurant may take them, fill them with food and drink and send them to the theatre, then to think that they know what life is, how many of the superficial girls who nightly rush to the suburban dance hall, to meet the suburban "society" ever pause for one minute to watch the moon slowly turn the night to silver as she creeps up and up making the clouds as mountains of pure silver, unless we of this century are hurrying here, hurrying there, we call it dull, we must live in crowded cities, we must have our streets but glittering advertisements, we have no time to reflect that these things pass and we pass as though we had never been. So the century in which Walpole lived is termed dull.

I make no apology for this digression, it is only necessary for Morley to be read, for us to be made to realise that the century in which Walpole lived and practised politics was the reverse of dull. Could a century be dull that produced a Swift, could a century be dull that gave birth to a Bolingbroke, could a century be dull that had a Court which was ruled by such a monarch as George the Second, could a century be called dull which saw the beginnings of what we may call the English Cabinet System? In this chapter I shall deal with five specific events in the life of Walpole

and see what Morley has to say with regard to them. They will be sufficient for our purpose.

For above all it is the purpose of this book (as should have been apparent long before this) to concentrate on Morley as a writer of critical studies and biographies. The works of Morley are of such untold value that they should be on the table of everyone who has any wish to know of men who made epochs, men who have left behind legacies of reform that men accept without ever knowing from whence they came. Men to-day accept education for the common people as a matter of fact, yet should they not know that Morley tells them that this originated from Rousseau, men accept or denounce Rationalism, yet many would for the first time when they read Morley know that Voltaire was the father of that particular way of looking at experience, men to-day largely wish for order, it will not be amiss that Morley shall tell them that Burke held this as his life ideal, men may love Gladstone as a politician, they may hate him, yet it will not be unbeneficial to either, that Morley shall tell that Gladstone always enthused about Dante, men who have become hard so that they think all men are cheats, may read with no small profit the delightful sympathy that Morley pours out on Diderot, the man, cheated, deserted by those he had helped, yet always ready to believe in the next beggar who begged a crust for him or begged that his ready pen should be dipped in the ink, to forward some cause he had at heart. Too much to-day is the reading of great men of the past confined to

reading for exams, it would be no loss to England if men and women alternated their novels with serious reading of men who have done great things, they might read Morley when the novel has come to an end, they might read him when the frost had stopped the hounds, they might read him even in the garden when the bees buzz around, when the distant hills are so blue that they might be the summer sea, and they would not lose.

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Digression is more often than not the most interesting part of a book for in it is to be found what the writer really thinks, Morley is very apt in his use of digression but he does not at the same time, like some authors fail to get back to his original subject or line of thought. Those who have read thus far may be inclined to think I have forgotten the five points in the life of Walpole I intended to deal with. I have not. It is not to be expected that Morley will be able to interest us much in Walpole if we start with the idea that his was the Dull Century, so by means of a digression (word of pure gold to authors) I have tried to show that a century of thought may be just as interesting as a century of action. But my five points that are becoming impatient. They shall be of Walpole in his earlier days, of his rise to power, of the Court (no finer writing than the description of this has Morley done) of the Cabinet, how few know that Walpole started that method of government ; and then some characteristics of Walpole. And of these five points it is really of

the Morley treatment of them, that we would have you not ignorant.

There is scarcely any thing more arresting than the early days of a man who afterwards achieves fame, so often there seem to be no indications that future greatness may be expected, in fact very often as a boy, the word commonplace may be applied, more often that which appears to be an accident starts the tramp to the road to fame, Dickens hating the blacking factory, led to literature, to quote but one famous example.

But apparently early on in his life in Parliament Walpole began to show signs that that was going to be his life's work and a very distinguished work at that. So Morley writes cheerfully, knowing that he is going to be able to tell of a famous politician "Walpole was first introduced into government—that important moment in the life of a member of Parliament—in a subordinate post on the council of Prince George of Denmark. In this inferior office he first showed those qualities of a great man of business, which along with his extraordinary general power of mind and character, afterwards made him a great minister." So once more is the remarkable insight of Morley shown, for getting at the qualities which fit men for certain posts. It would not be surprising to find many people suggesting that of all the qualifications necessary to a member of Parliament, that of a ready tongue might appear paramount. But Morley indicates with sage truth that Walpole had the instincts of business which helped in no small measure his effectiveness as a politician. A

"*flair*" (to use a journalistic word) for business is an essential to a politician, it is no good that he has the rhetoric of a St. Chrysostom if he has not business capacity, it is but little use that he has the intellect of a Gladstone if he has not in some large portion, a wealth of business understanding ; Morley then at once with his usual custom gives us the keynote of the success of the man he is writing of, of Walpole it is "business" and more generally, "punctuality in affairs, precision in accounts, insight into finance and his easy manners." Not long after the start of his parliamentary career we find Walpole sent to the Tower of London on a charge of getting money out of a Government contract. Morley is extremely indignant, though it became proved that Walpole had not used the money for his own ends. "We should all be horrified" he says "at such good nature at the public expense in any modern minister, but the fact that Walpole made no personal gain completely exonerated him with his contemporaries." Morley in his long career as a politician must himself have found many things done by politicians that horrified him but left his contemporaries cold, certain eminent politicians whose political coat turned to the party that seemed to hold the best offices, certain members of Parliament who having abused the Aristocracy afterwards dined frequently at its expense. He would not be pleased to-day to have seen his paper "*The Pall Mall Gazette*" die an unnatural death because its proprietor apparently merely used it to get his Parliamentary speeches reported when no other journal

appeared to consider they were worth the dignity of print. He would be still further horrified that women in Parliament should treat their office as a kind of rather serious joke and indulge in a kind of jocular flirtation with those male members whose only work in the House is to take £400 per annum.

So, soon enough we are following Walpole in his rise to Power and on arriving at that eminence he created a record in politics and held office for twenty-one years. In our day such a feat seems out of the question, we are used to Prime Minister's of a few months, we are not surprised to find a new Lord Chancellor in the morning's newspaper, we expect to find the Postmaster General one day *that* and the next Minister of Health, ours is an epoch when the political life is almost as precarious as the thing we call Life itself. But as Morley indicates, when Walpole came into power, revolution had been the order of things for eighty years. Peoples may stand revolution whether in politics or religion for a while, they may even like the uneven tenor of affairs, they may even think it good that no man should know what the next day may bring forth, but there comes a time when all does not seem well, when there is no suggestion of permanence in either action or thought.

Then it is that men in general sigh for a fixed rule, sigh for the years that shall see no change in the higher ministers, sigh for a Parliament that shall restore confidence that revolutions are not a permanent order, are not man's true destiny, are but really the expressions of unsatisfied longings for that which is permanent and solid.

Thus Walpole rose to power at what we may call the psychological moment, the country was sick of change, let us have, it said, at any cost, rest. Thus Morley writes not exactly surprised that Walpole should have been in power for so lengthy a period as twenty-one years.

“ Walpole held his offices practically without a break for twenty-one years. The younger Pitt had an almost equal span of unbroken supremacy, but with that exception there is no parallel to Walpole's long tenure of office. To estimate aright the vast significance of this extraordinary stability, we must remember that the country had just passed through eighty years of revolution. A man of eighty in 1721 could recall the protectorate of Oliver, the fall of Richard Cromwell, the restoration of Charles the Second, the exile of James the Second, the change of the order of succession to William of Orange, the reactionary ministry of Anne, and finally the second change to the House of Hanover.”

Not very long after Walpole had been raised to power a most remarkable man appears on the scene, so remarkable that Morley is forced into an almost exaggerated statement regarding him. True as it undoubtedly is that Bolingbroke *was* a very extraordinary person it is nevertheless a little perhaps questionable as to whether he was the kind of person as Morley suggests who “ did nothing less than unite the wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny and the wit of

Horace." Because though as Morley admits, it needed a genius to overthrow such a ministry as that formed by Godolphin and Marlborough, yet to apply such attributes as Socratic wisdom and Horace wit to the man who did this seems perhaps an eloquent licence rather than a solid fact. Because after all it is a little beside the point to measure wisdom and the excellence of it by calling it equal to Socrates, and it is a little vague to see in Pliny the height of dignity or even wit at its best always in Horace. So it may be even that Morley is not giving *enough* credit to Bolingbroke by making him a unity embodying a trinity of the attributes of Socrates, Pliny and Horace. The fact, is I think, that Morley is here a little out in his parallelism. If so though, he is certainly right in suggesting that Walpole made a mistake in ever allowing Bolingbroke to come back. But it displayed another good (in most cases) trait in the character of Walpole, that of toleration, which perhaps he only really once let slip, and that was in the case of Dr. Sacheverell, and in matters of religion but how few are those who do not find it difficult not to be ardently for or equally ardently against ; the admirable Aristotelian "mean" is seldom employed.

I must now turn to one of the most fascinating chapters Morley has ever written. It is that one which deals with the Court in the time of Walpole. It is a most delightful episode to read about if it be admitted that in no sense could the behaviour of the Court be called delightful. Of all the institutions that have a place in our realm, the

inside life of the Court is the least known to the common people, to them it would appear as something so outside their lives as to be hardly to be thought about, its ways and customs would appear to be so grotesque as to be but worthy of the pen of a cruel but brilliant satirist, it would seem as unlikely to the ordinary man that he would ever know anything of the life of the Court as it seems unlikely that the immortal cat ever did really visit the Queen, and even if it was so, it appears that all the cat *did* see at court was a mouse which had the good sense (though presumably a royal mouse) to hide under the nearest chair.

In the time of Walpole only one word describes the Court with any accuracy, it was corrupt, further it was nothing less than a vile place of unbridled licence, it was the resort of low foreign women and scheming foreign men, if Marie Antoinette exclaimed in horror at the mistresses and the favourites of the Court of Louis the Sixteenth, she would have been no less disgusted by the Court of George the Second but for her own good she would have been wiser had she behaved with the discretion of Caroline of Anspach.

Here is a brilliant picture of George the Second at about the time that Walpole was at the height of his power, it is almost one of the best portraits Morley has done.

“He had the strut, the gesticulation, the bustle of the bad play actor and like the bad actor, he was all the more eager for applause, because he inwardly suspected that he only half deserved it. He was not without sterling

qualities. He had physical courage, in Marlborough's wars he had served with credit and even his father who hated him, admitted that he fought like a man."

And here is a glimpse at the Court and the delightful "geniality" and "charm" of George the Second :

"It was his habit to visit the favourite Mrs Howard every evening in her own apartments at nine o'clock, with such mechanical punctuality that he often walked about his chamber for ten minutes with his watch in his hand, waiting for the blissful moment. A mistake by a valet would throw him into such agitation, that people who came into his room supposed that he might have just received some dreadful piece of news."

And of this dissolute and superficial court Walpole made full use, "he enjoyed the favour of the Court because he was able by prudent and skilful management of the House of Commons to obtain supplies, and it was one of his prime maxims to keep on good terms with the popular House and to exalt its place in the constitution."

It has been rather the fashion to imagine Walpole as popular at the Court in a very marked degree, rather in the way that Wolsey was popular at one time at the Court of Henry the Eighth. Morley does not share this opinion, for he writes seeing through this fallacious position. "It is a great mistake to suppose that Walpole was ever a popular minister. Dr Johnson once drew a

striking and a sound distinction between Walpole's position and that of the first Pitt. Walpole, he said was a minister given by the king to the people ; Pitt was a minister given by the people to the king."

Probably really George was a little afraid of him and it is no uncommon thing to *make* a man powerful if he is feared ; in order to keep on the right side of him. So that the popularity of Walpole at the Court had a quite big slice of discretion served up with it.

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I have now to consider the most important and far-reaching episode in the life of Walpole, it is the question of the Cabinet.

The question that Walpole set himself was whether Parliament should have a body guiding its own workings, the answer appeared to him most satisfactory that answered the question in the affirmative. Hence rose or rather took definite shape the Cabinet System. There are as Morley indicates four features of rule by a Cabinet, the first is that a number of people are responsible collectively, the second is that the Cabinet is answerable to the majority of the House and further to the electors responsible for that majority, the third is that the Cabinet is formed of one party, and the fourth is that the Prime Minister is the head.

Whether to-day rule by a Cabinet is the best form of Government is a question upon which there is no very general agreement, it is not our

business to go into the question here, that can be left to those who wish to write political treatises. In passing I may remark that at present there does not seem to be a more satisfactory method of government than by the Cabinet System composed of a definite party under the guidance and control of the Prime Minister.

Yet in the time of Walpole it must not be forgotten that these principles of Cabinet administration had not reached the form they have to-day, "Walpole undoubtedly made a long stride towards *establishing* the doctrine of Cabinet solidarity. The cardinal question of the position of the Prime Minister was in a most singular stage, for Walpole was in practice able to invest himself with more of the functions and powers of a Prime Minister than any of his successors and yet was compelled by the feeling of the time earnestly and profusely to repudiate both the name and title and every one of the pretensions that it involves."

Though Morley is aware that it could not be said that Walpole actually *made* the Cabinet in its present shape, yet he is equally aware that the *idea* which has grown into the Cabinet System, may be said to have emanated from him. Morley has done a great service by writing so clearly of the formation of the Cabinet, the ignorance of the history of that organisation is surprising. Mr Belloc in a clever volume on the House of Commons has suggested with no bated breath that the form of Government by that House is ending, he suggests in its place a likely return to the monarchy. Of this opinion Morley has no sympathy, rather

he predicts that it will be probable that no very great changes (at least in the near future) will be made in the actions of the Cabinet. Writing some years ago Morley says "To-day it is correct to say that the Cabinet has drawn to itself all and more than all, of the royal power over legislation, as well as many of the most important legislative powers of Parliament." What Morley said some years ago is true enough to-day, yet I would not like to suggest that yet the Cabinet has found its *final* form. Morley himself however evidently thought that it had.

It is now time that a few of the characteristics of Walpole were dealt with, for of drawing the picture of a man, Morley has no equal. He gives us just what we wish to know, the temper of a man, his pleasures, his morals, his ideals. For it is almost always true that a public man has two sides (I do not mean in any unpleasant sense) that which he shows to the world and that which he shows before his own fireside. Morley always manages to give us a welcome insight into both these sides, we are enabled to see the brilliant writer Rousseau miserable for Madame de Warens, we peep at Diderot performing eccentric evolutions in the theatre, Hume, the cold philosopher is shown to us seasick, mournfully we gaze on the death-bed of Queen Anne, the sudden end at a dinner of Diderot, the peaceful passing of Gladstone. Morley does what so few historians do, he makes us realise that we are dealing with real people, we laugh with them, we laugh at them (but not ill naturedly) we grieve with them, we wish that

they might be with us, we rush to the window, down in the street far below muffled figures pass, they might even be those whom we have just read of, then looking up we see the stars, but no, we say, they are far above them, when at last the men and women we have read of die, we sigh that they are here no more, that their voices are stilled, that the hand that held the pen is long since fallen to dust, almost in despair we turn to Morley and ask that the book shall never end that we may not be those who stand by, almost as personal mourners.

Of Walpole Morley shall paint the picture.

“Although, however, there is nothing in such a character as Walpole’s to dazzle or to inspire, he possessed in the highest degree, and displayed on the widest scale, those qualities of intelligence, prudence, watchfulness and unshaken constancy, which fit a man to act a great part in the trying field of civil contention. He was the gayest and easiest of companions. Like his father before him Walpole was a lover of company. There are few more curious pictures of conviviality under difficulties than that of George the First after a morning’s hunting at Richmond, drinking punch and talking dog Latin with Walpole all the afternoon. The minister was not a drunkard, as Harley, Carteret and Daniel Pulteney all were. Walpole’s faults of external demeanour were of a kind of which our own age has become intolerant. His talk at table was such as to-day would send all the ladies flying from the room.”

In this last sentence Morley is talking nonsense, unfortunately ladies do not care (for the most part) what the conversation is so long as it is moderately inane and moderately offensive, it is a profound mistake to imagine women are easily offended, they are not, it is not cynicism which forces us to the opinion that in conversation women are quite as indiscreet as men.

"He cared little more for musicians than he cared for literature, calling them a pack of fiddlers. For pictures he had both a genuine enthusiasm and a good judgment. Walpole took the pleasures, the honours, the prizes of the world as they came in his way and he thoroughly relished and enjoyed them; but what his heart was seriously set upon all the time, seriously, persistently, strenuously, devotedly, was the promotion of good government and the frustration and confusion of its enemies."

What better wish? Though men may call Walpole's the dull century, yet it produced in him a very remarkable man, about whom it is not to be denied Morley has written a very remarkable and pleasant book.

Chapter Seven

MORLEY AND COBDEN

PROBABLY in a pure and simple biography an author has not the opportunity of rising to the heights of literary style, that he may attain in a study. In a biography his way is more or less clear, he has to write decently and in order an account of the life of a certain man or woman. In a study the thing is somewhat different. He has not only to write *of* a man but he has to make a great many comments *about* him. In a biography an author may quite easily merely mention that so and so wrote a book at a certain period of his life. Not so the writer of a study, he has to mention what the book is about, why it is valuable, whether it has style, whether it did what it professed to do. In a word a writer of a study must be a critic, the writer of a biography need not be that at all. In this present chapter we are once again dealing with Morley as a biographer, he has not quite then the same opportunities as in such a book as Rousseau (though that *is* in perhaps a more limited sense a biography) he has not quite so much need of his great critical powers, his clear style, the whole thing is more straight-

forward. And this is no disparagement, it merely proves once again that Morley knows exactly what the subject in hand demands.

In the case of Cobden we are dealing with a politician pure and simple. In many ways politics is rather a narrow game. The politician very often follows all through his career an illusive object, he more often than not comes to the end of his political life with the feeling that all he has achieved is annoyance of his enemies and disappointment to his friends. The futility of politics to-day is not that the people no longer place any reliance in the House of Commons, but that politicians are insincere not so much from bad motive as from habit. It has become the thing to support that party which seems to promise the highest office, thus a man may be a Liberal to-day and a Conservative to-morrow. There is no need to cite examples when this kind of vacillating is becoming the general rule. It is an undoubted fact that politics to-day are corrupt, but is this surprising when we have in the House retired actresses who merely look pretty, women like Lady Astor who think they must be rude, men who behave as unruly schoolboys and ex-cabinet ministers who weep when they are told too plainly to be ignored, that they are not wanted.

In the day of Cobden things were different, not that then politics were perfect but they were not insincere. It is not our purpose to even sketch the general trend of politics in the time of Cobden ; in this chapter we are dealing specifically with

Morley as the biographer of that noted politician. Cobden whatever his detractors may say (and they say much with the usual hostility that small men have for great men) Cobden achieved a great deal. At once, I shall, ignoring the beginnings of Cobden, concentrate on the Corn Law agitation and try and discover what Morley thinks Cobden achieved on that question.

It will not be irrelevant to follow a Morley digression as to what exactly the Corn Laws were. They have been the subject of much controversy and they are often quoted without much thought as to the aptness of the quotation. It would be most difficult to find a writer who is more skilled at the use of parenthesis than Morley, there is no method of literary approach which can make for clearer thinking, there is no method which can on the other hand, so tend to obscure the drift of the narrative and break the continuity. It is in a chapter in the form of a parenthesis by which Morley writes of the Corn Laws.

"Their destruction was the one finished triumph with which Cobden's name is associated. The wider doctrines which he tried to impress upon men still await the seal of general acceptance ; but it is a tolerably safe prophecy that no English statesmen will ever revive a tax upon bread. The Duke of Wellington introduced a new Corn Bill. This bad measure accepted Canning's principle, if we may give the name of principle to an empirical device ; but it carried the principle further in the wrong direction. In the bill of 1827,

the starting point had been the exaction of a twenty shilling duty, when the home price was sixty shillings the quarter. According to the bill of 1828, when the price in the home market was sixty-four shillings, the duty was twenty-three shillings and eightpence. The variations in the amount of duty were not equal as in the previous bill, but went by leaps. Thus, when wheat was at sixty-nine shillings, the duty was sixteen and eightpence; and when the home price rose to seventy-three then the duty fell to the nominal rate of a shilling. This was the Corn Law which Cobden and his friends rose up to overthrow."

If ever there was a practical agitation that boasted of being at the same time political, this certainly was. To tax bread was the most calamitous measure the English government could have passed, it might have been the very quickest way to a revolution. The overthrow of the Corn Law was a triumph never before seen in Politics, it was a triumph of practical foresight over inane lack of it. How the agitation of Cobden killed the Corn Laws must now be considered. "The wider doctrine" of Cobden that Morley speaks of has, it is true, not been so generally successful. General doctrines are a thing that take much length of years before they are finally successful or otherwise, a man is much more likely to succeed when he attacks a definite thing. In politics destruction is far easier than construction. Though one would be reluctant to in any way detract

from the triumph of Cobden in killing the Corn Laws, it must not be forgotten that he was fighting something that would affect the very livelihood of the population in no limited sense whatever. Morley right as he is to insist that Cobden *did* score a great victory does not seem to realise that that victory was no good reason for being a little surprised that Cobdenism has not yet won nor nearly won, its final triumph. It is rather a characteristic of Morley to try and deduce a general situation from a particular.

The question in a concrete form which of course Cobden wished to impose on the country was what we now call Free Trade. Into the merits or otherwise of that we cannot go here, politicians still fight the battle of Protection and Free Trade, still the public is interested only in so far that either doctrine seems to be affecting its purse, there is nothing that is so convincing to the ordinary person as the necessity of opposition to anything that makes an attack on his pocket, it was this which very largely gave Cobden such sure ground. Protection may leave a man cold, Free Trade may equally find him an unresponsive citizen, but put a tax upon bread or bacon or cheese and immediately he is an ardent politician supporting Free Trade if it seems the remedy against the tax, equally ready to support, Protection if *that* seems the remedy. But we are in danger of wandering away from Cobden. How then did he set about to get rid of the Corn Laws?

This was the question that Cobden set himself. To Morley it was the backbone of the discussion.

“ With a population increasing at the rate of a thousand souls a week, how can wages be kept up, unless there be constantly increasing markets found for the employment of labour ; and how can foreign countries buy our manufactures, unless we take in return their corn, timber, or whatever else they are able to produce ? ”

It has to be carefully remembered that if Cobden was the person who led the Anti-Corn Law party to victory, it was not *he* who actually started the agitation. Morley tells us of how an association had been formed in 1836 and how by reason of the impotence of its members nothing was accomplished. Once again it is apparent how much the success of any kind of venture depends upon personality, that peculiar attribute of the human race, all of us can recognise and none can actually define. So many people seem to lack this attribute whether they be kings, or archbishops or newspaper boys. Of all the attributes of man personality is the least confined to those of substantial worldly position.

Here is a picture of Cobden at the height of his popularity when he was fighting tooth and nail to smash the Corn Laws. “ If Cobden’s name was mentioned at a meeting, the audience would rise and give three times three for the member for Stockport, the friend of the people.” No description ever better fitted a man than this, all through the life of Cobden, Morley again and again makes it apparent that he was indeed the friend of the people. There could scarcely be higher praise, especially for a politician, when so

often the title, betrayer of the people would be more truthful. Yet of course there were those who hated Cobden, has any man won universal popularity, certainly not, at least no man who is worth any consideration. With that fair minded aspect that Morley nearly always shows, even when it means an attack on someone he greatly admires, he shows the other side, when "the three times three" would be given in hisses not in cheers. "In the same way the men on the other side singled him out for a special vituperation; and people who had never seen a print works in their lives excited agricultural audiences by asserting that Cobden was making enormous wealth at the expense of the strength, the happiness, the limbs and the very life of little children." The question of the subsequent national award must be gone into later, far from making money through his politics, Cobden as Morley gravely points out, was letting his own business in Manchester fall to pieces.

In 1846 had we been down at Westminster it would soon have been obvious that some excitement was astir. Cobdenism (not then known as such), was coming into its own. "A few days after the Session opened, the Prime Minister announced his proposals. The repeal of the Corn Laws was to be total." Here indeed was victory while (unlike so many) the victor was able to enjoy the shouts of a multitude, the song of those who sang that oppression was at an end, the dinners, the laudatory speeches and then at least for a little, a spell of quiet after the stress and storm of battle.

I must now pass to that melancholy spectacle the Crimean War. Never perhaps has a war been caused by such acute political bungling as that of the two ministers Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell. Their lack of any use of diplomacy is quite startling. It has caused Morley to write a very farseeing and accurate description of what diplomacy can do. "Diplomacy in their hands (Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell) always meant either veiled menace or tart lecturing, instead of being the great, the difficult, the beneficent art, which it has been in the hands of its worthiest masters, of so reconciling interests, soothing jealous susceptibilities, allaying apprehensions, organising influences, inventing solutions, that the world may move with something like steadiness along the grooves of deep pacific policy, instead of tossing on a viewless sea of violence and passion."

Although the Crimean War is to many people but an echo of an age long since past, yet there are still many who are interested to fight the policies that preceded it, over and over again. There are still those who are violently on the side of Lord Palmerston and there are still those who are equally on the side of Mr Bright and Cobden. Morley himself has not the slightest compunction in entirely supporting the Manchester Policy and does not hesitate to condemn the Palmerston policy.

Looking back to the Crimean War we are of the opinion that without any doubt Cobden was right in his judgments. It has ever been the prerogative of English politicians as a general rule to muddle military affairs, in recent times,

Gallipoli is a very potent example. Yet to-day there are people foolish enough to try and blame the generals out there when it was the bunglers in Whitehall who were to blame.

There are three important questions upon which Cobden and Lord Palmerston differed. In each case naturally Morley supports Cobden. Palmerston asked, why the Czar could not be satisfied with the progressively Liberal system of Turkey. Years before with true foresight Cobden had pointed out that no such system existed in Turkey. The miserable *débaîle* of Sebastopool can only be made responsible to Lord Palmerston, yet Cobden again and again pointed out that the importance of the capture or destruction of that city was quite out of proportion to the amount of energy and loss of life that would be the bill for such a result. Again Palmerston made a fatal mistake in sending a military force to the Crimea, while Cobden urged that the Navy should be used. Is there anything more ridiculous than the thought of a Prime Minister some sixty or more years ago sending a force to a country like the Crimea, cut off from easy supplies, in pathetic plight as regards medical necessities? No words are strong enough to denounce Lord Palmerston; he was an inefficient bigoted statesman who knew as much about foreign affairs as the bald headed gentlemen who would make war every day from their arm-chairs in the Athenaeum, who every day write letters that Editors are foolish enough to print, usually because they do not know or care whether the opinions expressed are right or wrong.

Morley usually the most tolerant of men cannot hide his indignation at Palmerston and his disgusting presumption. "The truth is, that to Lord Palmerston it was still incomprehensible and intolerable that a couple of manufacturers from Lancashire should presume to teach him foreign policy. Still more offensive to him was their introduction of morality into the mysteries of the Foreign Office." The result to Cobden and Bright was an unpopularity that merely strengthened their purpose. There is nothing more likely to make strong men stronger than opposition, while opposition usually makes weak men weaker, though sometimes it finds in them unexpected stores of determination.

The reason that Cobden and Bright earned such hatred by their pacific policy is not far to seek. The country was under the deadly power of a war fever, once let war grip a nation and no questions of the reasonableness of any pacific policy can expect any support. It had long been known, as Morley says that Bright and Cobden had been for many years ardent pacifists, it could not then be wondered at that their stand against the Crimean War must have seemed at the moment, but their general creed applied to a particular event. That it was not so is surely apparent to all those who are not foolish enough to still believe that Palmerston was right. At the moment the public would listen to no reason, it is easily seen by Morley, who of all men must have known both as an Editor and as a politician the futility of persuading a population that has been led astray by a

popular hero (Palmerston at the moment was this) towards an insane policy. "The public had worked itself into a mood in which the most solid reasoning, the most careful tenderness of prejudice, the most unanswerable expostulations were all alike unavailing."

This courageous attitude of Bright and Cobden in the face of unbridled hostility, would naturally be very pleasing to a man like Morley. In no half hearted way he pays them tribute for their devotion to an unpopular cause and their steadfast attitude. "It is" he says "impossible not to regard the attitude of the two objects of this vast unpopularity as one of the most truly admirable spectacles in our political history. The moral fortitude, like the political wisdom of these two strong men, begins to stand out with a splendour that already recalls the great historic types of statesmanship and patriotism. Even now our heartfelt admiration and gratitude goes out to them as it goes out to Burke for his lofty and manful protests against the war with America and the oppression of Ireland, and to Charles Fox for his bold and strenuous resistance to the war with the first French Republic. They had, as Lord Palmerston said, the whole world against them." This was quite as good as saying that Cobden and Bright were right, any opinion that has a vast mass of support behind it is certain to be fallacious, there is nothing so likely to be led astray as a huge mob, whether it be by a street corner orator or a superficial prime minister calling for war and using picturesque arguments instead of common

sense, that quality only possessed by those who are in no ordinary way commonplace. There is no more to be said, Palmerston ignored better men than himself and plunged England into a disgraceful war, once again showing that politicians are usually war makers if they are not carefully watched.

In this chapter I have dealt with the two most important episodes in the life of Cobden, his triumphant repeal of the Corn Laws and his unflinching opposition to the Crimean War. Morley is entirely in sympathy with Cobden, he sees in these two epochs a great political victory and a great moral victory, for Cobden's was a great moral victory that protested against the Crimean War, though in actual fact the result was not what the world would term a victory, for of course Cobden did not stop that war. In some ways Morley has written a better biography of Cobden than that he wrote of Gladstone. The fact is Morley though he has much sympathy for Gladstone, has for Cobden the most ardent admiration and affection. To him Cobden would have those ideals of statemanship that would appear to him as above blame. Morley would be the first to express admiration for the single heartedness of Cobden, he would be the first to delight in the brave way he bore private afflictions whether financial or in the dreadful blow that came in the death of his son. It would of course be absurd to say that Morley displays the same powers of analysis and insight that he did in his

studies of Voltaire and Rousseau. He had not the opportunity, to a certain extent Cobden was rather commonplace, he was not the creator of a system as Rousseau was, he was not the originator of a policy or philosophy as Voltaire was. Morley was dealing with a politician out and out, a man who all the time kept in front of him the ideal that what mattered was the forming of better conditions for the people.

Very briefly I must refer to the vexed question of the money Cobden received for his services and a few of his characteristics for it cannot be urged too often that no writer excels Morley in summing up the personality of a man.

Nearly every private man on giving up a piece of work receives a testimonial, why then should a man not receive an award after he has accomplished a great national work? The work undertaken by Cobden against the Corn Laws was of such dimension that it not only kept him busy night and day, but it did what was much more serious, it destroyed his private business. To say that national work should be above monetary reward is mere priggishness, it is no more unmoral to receive a monetary award than to receive a peerage. If as is so often the case, national work is undertaken with the object of gain, then it is to be heartily deplored. Cobden took exception to the Corn Laws because they seemed to him to strike at the common people, and he let no private business however embarrassing deter him from his purpose. Morley considers Cobden was entirely justified in allowing a National Testimonial to be made him,

he had no sympathy with the too often melancholy spectacle of state servants being left in the lurch when they had accomplished their work.

We have been enabled to see that in his public life "purpose" and "uprightness" were the words upon which Cobden based his conduct; it will not be out of place to end this chapter with a few words that Morley has to say of the private character of Cobden. For there is a private character as well as a public character and although they may not be in the essentials at variance, yet the two must have differences.

"In his own house, where public men do not always seek the popularity that is the very breath of their nostrils abroad, he was tender, solicitous, forbearing, never exacting. His thoroughly pleasant and genial temper made him treat everybody who approached him as a friend. His exceeding amiability was not insipid. He was never bitter, but he knew how to hit hard and if a friend did wrong and public mischief came of it Cobden did not shrink from the duty of dealing faithfully with him. On religious questions he was for the most part silent. When he was in the country, he went to church like other people. He was indifferent to the pleasures of the table, he did not care to acquire fine things of any kind and he had none of the passion of the collector. Politics were the one commanding interest of his life. He was a constant reader of "*Hansard*" and for one who seeks the purposes of action or controversy to make himself well versed in the

political transactions of the present century, there is no book so well worth the labour of ransacking. Cobden it is true deliberately attempted material success and did not attempt it with prudence. The failure was in fact due to the very qualities which made him successful in public affairs."

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The young man who is entering Parliament for the first time could hardly do better than to read Morley on Cobden. He will then learn that politics are not in their true sense merely a game of dialectic or a game of cross purposes. They are a serious work destined to give good government to the people. Material success is no doubt a thing that the world tells the young to aim at, the world tells the young man to enter Parliament to make a name for himself. To Cobden politics was a life work, it had a touch of something more permanent than the material in it. When Mr Stanley Baldwin became Prime Minister his words to a body of reporters too eager get away with their "copy" was, "pray for me." It was no doubt startling but it made it plain that politics are under the guidance of Providence, that they are of this world, yet not of this world, that they are as they were to Cobden that which helps mankind in its struggle towards true liberty both of the body and the soul.

Chapter Eight

REGARDING CROMWELL

IN all English history it is not possible to find a more picturesque period than that during which Oliver Cromwell fought against King Charles the First, beat him and finally caused his head to fall in Whitehall on a cold January morning, a morning with the tramp of men to be heard without the windows, the sound of cursing and sobbing to be found within a thousands windows, the sight of massed pikes, of a proud defiant face marching for the last time, while a people watched in awed amazement, as men always will watch at the passing of the king, whether it be to open Parliament, whether it be in an enclosed coffin, whether it be to execution. The type of crowds that watched the King of the Jews pass to be Crucified ; later would watch the passing of Charles, those that watched his passage would later be found to watch the slow cart taking Louis the Sixteenth to the guillotine. Crowds are for ever the same, no matter in what age, in what clime at the passing of the king they will line the roadway. It is of the period of Oliver Cromwell that we now come to, we have followed

Morley as he wrote of the makers of the French Revolution, we have seen him intimate with Gladstone, we have followed his precise analysis of Burke, now we follow him in his estimate of the character and importance of Oliver Cromwell.

Oliver Cromwell is one of those figures in history who has ever been the cause of violent controversy, he has been upbraided as an arch scoundrel who determined from early youth to destroy the monarchy, he has been assailed as a blustering rogue, on the other hand there have been many who have seen in Cromwell a very perfect example of the type of man who does not let anything however unpleasing deter him from his purpose, and never more so than when that purpose would seem to have a religious basis upon which it rested. I have no intention in this chapter of writing upon the *actual* campaign of Cromwell which for all time will be known as the Civil War. The story of that vast campaign has been told a hundred times by a hundred historians. This of course might in itself be no good reason for declining to tell the story over again, there are events which perhaps never seem to have a lack of interest however often they are told. But the purpose of this chapter is to get at the picture of Cromwell as painted by Morley. It is but quite recently that we saw the delightful play produced by Mr John Drinkwater dealing with Cromwell. Though I do not think that he in all ways got at the essence of Cromwell I think that he gave a very good idea of what Cromwell is popularly supposed to be.

In this chapter following my method throughout

this book I shall take various points in the career of Cromwell, as far as possible those upon which historians disagree, with the intention of getting the Morley aspect of him.

It has been a favourite theme with those who dislike Cromwell to suggest with an admirable show of piety that he led as a youth a very wicked life. This kind of argument is as about as ineffectual as it is absurd, a young man may be somewhat dissipated but that in itself though *possibly* regrettable, has no connection whatever with a subsequent career that may be either brilliant or futile. Criticism of the young is best left alone, it is usually the monopoly of pompous bishops unpleasant political women, and other superfluous persons. While it may be said that how youth is spent may affect the subsequent *private* life, it is an exaggeration to see in a dissolute spent youth seeds for a misused *public* life. If Cromwell *did* spend his early life viciously he amply atoned for it when he sent Charles to his well merited death. Is there anything more ludicrous than the recent attempts by the Church to give the dignity of martyr to Charles, he was a traitor, he betrayed his best friends, he was the enemy of the people, his only redeeming feature was that he met his death with a fortitude which was very largely composed of despair. There is no such thing as any martyrdom about the death of Charles, rather it was an act of religion that ended his mischievous reign in 1649. Morley has not the slightest sympathy with those superficial bigots who wishing to vent their hatred upon

Cromwell ascribe to him a youth of dissipation. So he writes with abrupt frankness :

“ The stories about Oliver’s wicked youth deserve not an instant’s notice. In any case the ferocity of party passion was certain to invent them.”

Little more need be said, the attack on the early years of Cromwell are but a stroke delivered by those who are the partisans of Charles, one of the worst of the English kings. If Cromwell had never lived, it would be an interesting question as to how far England would have suffered at the hands of Charles, it would be still more interesting to see the people who now call him “ martyr ” calling him tyrant. It is a remarkable thing how so many people wish to whitewash a man because he happened to die by the executioners axe, the Church has ever done this, it has always attempted to make out the early martyrs as Saints when as a matter of fact they simply died because an Emperor saw that they were nothing less than a secret political party. Though it is not our question here, it may be just mentioned that it seems extremely unlikely that any of the martyrs saw anything religious in their sufferings, they would have been the first to deny that the Church had any right to call them Saints, Paul was not a Saint, he was a clever apologist of a new religion, the same may be said of all the Apostles, probably the word Saint is an exaggeration, it is but an ecclesiastical term which is superficial.

There is in the Civil War a rather interesting

parallel to the French Revolution. Though Morley does not point the parallel it is I think evident that there is one. "It has been said," he says, "that antagonism between Charles and his parliament broke out at once as an historical necessity." We cannot go into the question as to whether this was so or not. It may be remembered that in the French Revolution there were many who saw in that conflict but the outbreak of an historical necessity. So ; many have also seen in the Civil War but the outbreak of an historical necessity in England. Of course should this be so the responsibility of Charles for the Civil War might have to be looked at afresh. But I am inclined to think that neither in France nor in England the two revolutions could be termed with any accurate precision historical necessities. Morley by a suppositious "if" touches on the point of the English "Historical Necessity" in an interesting way. It will not be out of place to quote him at some length, for though no proof can be obtained from the suppositious "if" argument, commonsense can deduce propositions that may not be termed unthinkingly as irrational.

"Suppose that Charles had been endowed with the qualities of Oliver—his strong will, his active courage, his powerful comprehension, above all his perception of immovable facts—how might things have gone? Or suppose Oliver the son of King James and that he had inherited such a situation as confronted King Charles? In either case the English constitution and the imitation of it all over the globe,

might have been run in another mould. As it was Charles had neither vision nor grasp. It is not enough to say that he was undone by his duplicity. Charles was double, as a man of inferior understanding would be double who had studied Bacon's Essay on Simulation and Dissimulation, without digesting it or ever deeply marking its first sentence that dissimulation is but a faint kind of policy or wisdom, for it asketh a strong wit and a strong heart to know when to tell truth and to do it ; therefore it is the worst sort of politicians that are the great dissemblers. This pregnant truth Charles never took to heart. His fault and no statesman can ever have a worse—was that he never saw things as they were."

How much of English history that is ill reading could be ascribed to the fatal inability of English Statesmen to see things as they are ? It is a melancholy enough fact, but English Statesmanship though it has often been of the best, has not seldom been of the worst, who can but ascribe the Indian Mutiny to rank bad statesmanship, who can but see in the Crimean War, the logical outcome of arrogant and unreasonable statesmanship, in our own day who is there to deny that the appalling state of Europe is not in large measure due to the fatal inability of our statesmen to see things as they are, a dreamer may be an admirable man of letters but as a statesman, he is the most dangerous enemy of the state. In passing Morley shall tell us the essence of the failure of Charles to

do anything that was any good to himself or the nation which he ruled until it in its infinite wisdom ruled him through the mighty statesman and hero Oliver Cromwell.

“Of gratitude for service, of sympathy, of courage in friendship, he never showed a spark. He had one ardent and constant sentiment, his devotion to his consort.”

I shall now without further delay travel on many years to the times when Cromwell was the Protector, when the head of Charles had fallen, when England was under the Commonwealth, when it really looked as if rule by the people for the people was near accomplishment. It gives us an interesting spectacle of rule by a soldier to see Cromwell the great general, the leader of the whole civil population. Of this period one of the most important events was the scheme of Cromwell for propagating religion. He was in reality an Erastian. Morley is keenly alive to the ideals of Cromwell with regard to religion. “His ideal was a state church, based upon a comprehension from which episcopalians were to be shut out. The exclusion was fatal to it as a final settlement.” It is to Morley an unfortunate position as it tended to bar progress and Morley was ever on the side of progression. The mischief had been done in the sacrileges against the episcopal clergy, the seeds of hatred of one religious body for another had been finally sown, they have existed to this very day. Morley sees how this fatal intolerance of Cromwell for the Episcopalians entirely prevented

his ideal of a state Church from becoming a fact. It is so often shown whether in religion or other activities that intolerance has been the one bar to the perfecting of an ideal. Cromwell no doubt thought that the Episcopalians would be a troublesome faction, but if a Church is to be of the State all parties must be allowed to put forward an opinion. Morley though seeing how Cromwell spoilt his scheme by intolerance, does not seem to realise that Cromwell as a military leader would be unlikely to allow differences of opinion, he might well at the time forget that upon matters of religion and the Church a military precision and discipline could not be enacted without serious opposition.

It has of course been often said that the Protectorate was a new settlement of parliamentary sovereignty. This is a position that is entirely untrue, in fact as Morley indicates, the reverse was the case. "The history of the protectorate in its two phases under the two instruments of 1653 and 1657 by which it was constituted, seems rather to mark a progressive return to an old system than the creation of a new one." This is very important as too often we are told by historians that the government under Cromwell was something entirely new, something entirely outside that which had ever been experienced, when it was to state an imaginary metaphor a progress backwards. It is in these intricate details that Morley always lays his finger on the weak reasonings of other historians.

We must now sum up. As I have said the character of Cromwell has been one that has always

been decided in different ways according to where sympathies in the struggle between him and Charles lie. Yet this is to tend towards a biased judgment. It is our purpose to find out what Morley himself thought of Cromwell, in no better way can this be done than by quotation.

“ It was by his military genius, by the might of the legions that he created and controlled and led to victory upon victory ; it was at Marston and Naseby, at Preston and Worcester, in Ireland and at Dunbar that Cromwell set his deep mark on the destinies of England as she was and of that vaster dominion into which the English realm was in the course of ages to be transformed.”

Too little very often has been made of the military genius of Cromwell, we are inclined to look upon him fallaciously as the founder of a republican type of government, it is to Morley that we owe the fact that it is increasingly being realised that the military genius of Cromwell was of the order of a Napoleon or a Hannibal. Though we may differ with his politics, though his name may be the essence to some of all that they condemn as odious, it would be but a fool really worthy of the name, who would deny the wisdom of Morley in placing before all else the terrific military genius of Cromwell. And what greater form of genius than military genius, with its need of reasoning, courage, contempt of death, its dependence on the value of life.

And on the side of government.

“ In saying that Cromwell had the spirit,

insight and grasp that fit a man to wield power in high affairs, we only repeat that he had the instinct of government, and this is a very different thing from either a taste for abstract ideas of politics, or the passion for liberty. Cromwell was no Frederick the Great who spoke of mankind as *diese verdammte Race*, that accursed tribe. He belonged to the rarer and nobler type of governing men, who see the golden side, who count faith, pity, hope, among the counsels of practical wisdom and who for political power seek a moral base. This is a key to men's admiration for him. His ideals were high, his fidelity to them though sometimes clouded was still abiding, his ambition was pure."

It may be urged that so much has been written of Cromwell that there was no need for Morley to add to the writings. This is a position that is as futile as it is popular. The greater a man the more there is to be known about him. It has never been the fate of Morley to write a superfluous book, he has always had something new to say about a subject however much it has been written. If Morley had only told us that the essence of Cromwell was his military genius, we could ill have spared not being told this. Any man who kills a king is worthy of many books, again and again in reading Morley as he writes of Cromwell we are forced to readjust our opinions and realise that Morley is nearly always right.

END OF PART ONE



PART TWO

Chapter Nine

ABOUT MACHIAVELLI

THERE is nothing strange that in the fifteenth century *Italy* should have produced a great thinker on matters of government. Had not Rome centuries before been the law giver, the great state whose keyword was law, whose corner stone was government? It is of course true that Italy of the fifteenth century was a totally different country to Italy of the first and second centuries, yet something of its essence would be sure to occur to the mind of a thinker, it would not be surprising to find a genius concerning himself with matters of government. As Plato wrote his Ideal Republic so Machiavelli wrote his idea of government. It may of course be said quite easily by many, that government can have no set rules or propositions, that it must pursue its way directed by the needs of the moment, this is of course true to a limited extent. But on the other hand there are certain functions of government which do not change, any more than in certain fundamentals humanity does not change. In government, the ideal of government, that of the greatest good for the greatest

number remains constant, though the means of attaining that may vary, that the good of the country and its people is always paramount no rational person would deny, though he might conceive of government by a different method every year.

When then Machiavelli set out a scheme of government, he was merely putting forward certain ethics which seemed to him to be useful in helping those governing to function effectively. In this chapter it is our business to see something of his scheme and how it appears to Morley, whether he considers it mischievous, how far he finds it useful, how far such a theoretical method as put forward by Machiavelli could be put into practice. To do this we must take some of the principal propositions of this great Italian writer and examine them with some care. For it is as well to remember that Machiavelli has been hated and is hated with much the same hatred that has been the birthright of Voltaire. In fact it is no exaggeration to say that much of Morley's best work has been, not always a vindication, but a careful examination of those who have by their writings and philosophies earned the best of all honours (very often) dislike by the orthodox whose creed is usually refusal to think lest the time worn dogmas receive the destruction they so often so well merit. But enough digression, as I have said word of gold, but unlike gold more often at hand to be used.

Thus in the very first words about this Italian thinker, Morley warns us that his is a name hated. "Before he had been dead fifty years, his name

had become a byword and a proverb. From Thomas Cromwell and Elizabeth; from the massacre of St Bartholomew, through League and Fronde, through Louis the Fourteenth; Revolution and Empire, down to the third Napoleon and the Days of December; from the Lutheran Reformation down to the blood and iron of Bismarck, from Ferdinand the Catholic down to Don Carlos, from the Sack of Rome down to Gioberti, Mazzini, and Cavour: in all the great countries all over the West, this strange shade is seen haunting men's minds; exciting, frightening, provoking, perplexing, like some unholy necromancer bewildering reason and conscience by paradox and riddle. So far from withering or fading, his repute and writing seem to attract deeper consideration as time goes on, and they have never been objects of more copious attention throughout Europe than in the half century that is now closing"—the last half of the nineteenth century.

It is then no ordinary man that we are examining, it is no destructive critic whose criticism passeth as the wind, it is of a constructive writer whose pen has set men thinking where the East moves but slowly, where the West is ever ready to progress, where the South lazily slumbers, where the North is ever eager for any kind of activity.

The Italy of the day of Machiavelli was the day of the hired assassin when poison and the dagger were the means of getting rid of people who were thought better out of the way, Morley tells an interesting example of a certain Jesuit, who,

asked whether it was lawful to slay a tyrant, replied that it was only lawful to exterminate him by the poniard. Once again Morley by a small example has shown how of all the superficial sects that have disgraced history, the Jesuits are not the least pernicious.

As Voltaire and Rousseau based their systems of reform in religion and education on that which they observed about them, so Machiavelli based his system of government on that which he observed, he was not the type of writer who got together rules from mere conjecture, he saw what was going on and from that made his plans "he withdrew politics from scholasticism and based their consideration upon observation and experience."

As Morley makes it clear Machiavelli was in no sense the dreamer, he mingled with the world, he saw the conduct of its public life, he saw how government was merely then, assassination by hired assassins, he saw how the country in which he lived needed someone who should attempt to make a government that should be something that was of use, to him it seemed to be summed up in the thought ; government by artifice.

Morley indicates that in the writings of Machiavelli there was nothing that had not some thought in it, so much that is written is merely words strung together with no tangible thought in them. In talking of Machiavelli we discover that to Morley the greatest of the virtues in literature is that the prose writing shall be direct, vivid and rational. These virtues Machiavelli had to the full.

"Nobody has ever surpassed him in the power of throwing pregnant vigour into a single concentrated word. Of some pages it has been well said that they are written with the point of a stiletto."

I have already said that Machiavelli like Voltaire and Rousseau based his philosophy (for government *is* a philosophy) upon what he saw as he moved about among men. Thus it is no surprise to find Morley regretting that Machiavelli looked upon man as a whole as degraded. It is one of the commonest of human faults to look upon human nature as a whole from the few persons who cross our limited perspective. Let us live among criminals and we think that the tendency of the mass of humanity is eddying towards crime, let us see the qualities of courage, virtue, longsuffering displayed by our neighbours and we incline to the thought that humanity is really good and pure. So Machiavelli fell into the mistake of putting too low an estimate upon the nature of the people, and naturally this would not tend to make his schemes of government easier, it is not possible to get good results out of poor material, any more than it is to be expected that good material will be accepted by inferior people.

So Morley quotes from Machiavelli "men never do anything good unless they are driven; and where they have their choice and can use what licence they will, all is filled with disorder and confusion. They are taken in by appearances. They follow the event. They easily become corrupted. Their will is weak. They know not how to be thoroughly good or thoroughly bad; they

vacillate between ; they take middle paths, the worst of all " and here with unnecessary contempt, taking the particular for the general, Machiavelli sums up " Men are a little breed." With great perception Morley sees why Machiavelli arrives at this melancholy position. " all this is not satire, it is not misanthropy ; it is the student of the art of government thinking over the material with which he has to deal. These judgments of Machiavelli have none of the wrath of Juvenal, none of the impious truculence of Swift. They have not the bitterness, that hides in the laugh of Molière, nor the chagrin and disdain with which Pascal broods over unhappy man and his dark lot. Least of all are they the voice of the preacher calling sinners to repentance. The tale is only rather a grim record, from inspection, of the foundations on which the rulers of states must do their best to build."

Machiavelli is above all the disciple of Pragmatism, *value* to him is only of account in so much as it is practical, yet he was foolish enough to think that better government could appeal to people he so easily dubbed as " a little breed."

We have now arrived at the position that Morley finds in Machiavelli the fundamental error that is so popular, putting too low an estimate on humanity as a entity from observation of a very small part of it. From the disgusting state of Italy in the fifteenth century Machiavelli deduced rightly enough that what was wanting was some scheme of government and he proceeded to evolve one, or rather he propagated certain ethics of rule.

But he never seemed to see that what was more necessary was that the people should be better instructed so that in time they would be able to understand that rule by the dagger and by poison was but a stupid thing at best and a diabolical device at worst. This weakness of Machiavelli Morley brings out with his usual skill, no writer is more adapt at seeing the weakness of a man than Morley, yet he is always or nearly always able to abstain from bitterness. It is only really when Morley is concerned to show the hateful history that is bound up with ecclesiasticism that he becomes a little bitter, and as an exponent of the wealth of Free Thought are we surprised? For it is evident that Morley hated anything appertaining to arbitrary assumptions of authority, whether in politics or religion. I shall deal in a later chapter more fully with Morley generally. It is now time to look at the actual Machiavellian doctrine.

One of the oldest of difficult questions Machiavelli set himself, it was whether the world progressed and the answer was that it did not. This no doubt, as Morley agrees, is rather a startling answer when we are accustomed to look upon evolution as quite as natural as the orderly succession of night and day, when we learn that evolution began in the Garden of Eden, when Bernard Shaw treats us to a play in which it seems as if Cain played the part of a helper of evolution, when daily we read in the newspaper of new discoveries. Yet we must sometimes ask are these things really progression or are they but new

findings with no real moral trend whatever? Progress may be such when we murder our wives by pressing an electric button instead of resorting to the carving knife, yet it cannot be in the same standard as when some surgeon discovers that there *are* functions of the spleen or that leprosy is no longer incurable. Not everything that progresses is progress may be a dangerous paradox, but it is not so mischievous as the position of Machiavelli that progress is a negation. Of this situation it will be convenient to quote Morley, a man who certainly would not dogmatise as to the truth of the non-progress creed.

“Machiavelli seeks no moral interpretation for the mysterious scroll. We obey laws that we do not know but cannot resist. He contents himself with a maxim for the practical man—that it is better to be adventurous than cautious, for Fortune is a woman and to master her, she must be boldly handled.”

So gradually Machiavelli comes down to the particular case, that of Italy, he saw that country under the grip of a monstrous misrule. This is the vision that Morley indicates confronted the Italian genius. “He saw small despotic states harried by their petty tyrants, he saw republics worn out by faction and hate. Machiavelli himself had faith in free republics as the highest type of government but whether you have republic or tyranny matters less, he seems to say, that the governing power should be strong in the force of its own arms, intelligent, concentrated, resolute.”

At last Machiavelli comes to think that the best remedy is a governor who is to have certain virtues and we are bound to admit *had* certain vices. It is almost, if we are not stretching a point, a parallel to the beginning of the Christian story. The ancient world tired of abstract philosophies looking for a Personal King, so Machiavelli at last brings his wishes for government to a resting place in the Prince. What were his qualities as a ruler to be? they appear to have been a strange medley of nonsense and commonsense, a strange mixture of purity and impurity, a strange mixture of constancy and inconstancy, a strange medley of diplomacy sometimes legitimate, sometimes crude, sometimes almost evil.

Morley takes a most sensible view of the matter, he sees that the person most likely to be shocked is he who has not read history carefully. The man who is shocked by some of the methods of the Prince must see says Morley that that which he holds himself is not also in the course of history seen to be under that which might be called indiscreet. Morley takes a pungent example.

Machiavelli is discussing the question of religious creed and policy a nice little question which sometimes to-day worries certain politicians. Commenting on this Morley shows that after all if Machiavelli was a little Liberal his was not a unique position.

In the age that immediately followed Machiavelli three commanding figures stand out—William the Silent, Henry of Navarre and Elizabeth of England. It needs no peevish or

pharasaic memory to trace even in these imposing personalities some of the lineaments of Machiavelli's hated and scandalous picture. William the Silent changed from Lutheran to Catholic, then back to Lutheran, and then again from Lutheran to Calvinist. His numerous children were sometimes baptised in one of the three communions, sometimes in another just as political convenience served. Henry of Navarre abjured his Huguenot faith, then he returned to it, then he abjured it again. Our great Elizabeth, of famous memory, notoriously walked in tortuous and slippery path. Again, the most dolorous chapter in all history is that which recounts how men and women were burned, hanged, shot and cruelly tormented, for heresy; and there is a considerable body of authors, who through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used against heretics Machiavelli's arguments for making short work with rebels and asked with logical force why their reason of Church was not just as good as his reason of state. What is the real difference between the practices tolerated in the Prince for self-preservation of a secular state and all the abominations perpetuated in the name and for the sake of religious unity? "

Well may Morley ask this question. Least of all can members of certain Churches condemn Machiavelli when their creed has been one of blasphemy, cruelty, intolerance, burnings, break-

ings on the wheel, inquisitions more often than not that thereby political strength might be gained. Those who condemn Machiavelli let them look again at history, let them look to-day at politics, a spectacle of nothing matters except office, of politicians formerly enemies cooing together like turtle doves, let them beware who throws the first stone, let them beware lest it return like a stone slung by a boomerang, return and slay them. Machiavelli made mistakes, he attempted to make everything subordinate to policy, but Morley has seen well enough that he is not alone, that many whom the orthodox love to hold up to reverence are not without sin.

The whole central idea of Machiavelli was that the only thing that really mattered was the state. Here I think Morley has been led into rather a popular error. "The most imposing incarnation of the doctrine that reason of state covers all, is Napoleon." This is true enough, but then with a strange want of perception Morley writes, "Napoleon sacrificed pity, humanity, faith and public law less for the sake of the State than to satisfy an exorbitant passion for personal domination." This is to misunderstand the character of Napoleon, he was ambitious, he *did* wish that he might be the ruler of the world, but there was always one word that he wished might be the Lord of the Universe, that was France, Napoleon did not spare men when he had a war to wage, he did not rightly let sentiment come in, he was not one of those blunderheads who think war is a fine art to be waged as a game of chess, he wished to win

and he rightly did not let the loss of French soldiers stand in his way. His whole ambition was that he should be the ruler of the greatest nation and what was more important was that that nation should be France. We are shocked to find Morley exhibiting signs of being the narrow-minded Englishman who only saw in Napoleon a vile incarnation of personal ambition, if this was so there was less need than ever for St Helena to be the scene of the last years of Napoleon. A man who had only personal ambition in view would never have got the legions who worshipped him to follow, if behind, there had not been some idea of the greatness of France. The less reference there is by English statesmen to Napoleon the better it is, for of all the disgusting outrages that have blackened English history, the melancholy fate of the arch genius remains ever the most blatant. It is a strange fact that Morley, usually so accurate in his estimate of character, should have fallen into the position regarding Napoleon, usually taken up by small men and smaller women who piously see in him only personal ambition, when they are too niggardly to realise that in Napoleon we saw one of the greatest soldiers and statesmen who daily risked all that France might lead the world. That he failed does not concern us here, but let us remember that Napoleon always *really* won and never more so than when he caused the English to put him away on an island that then only should our wretched statesmen's knees cease from shaking.

However Morley recovering from his mistake

about Napoleon puts the case for Machiavelli in an admirable way.

"If one were to put the case for the Machiavellian philosophy in a modern way, it would, I suppose be something of this kind. Nature does not work by moral rules. Nature 'red in tooth and claw' does by system all that good men by system avoid. Is not the whole universe of sentiment being haunted all day and all night long by haggard shapes of Hunger, Cruelty, Force, Fear? War again is not conducted by moral rules. To declare war is to suspend not merely *habeas corpus* but the Ten Commandments and some other good commandments besides."

For Morley the one great thing against Machiavelli was that he ignored the moral force. But if so it must be remembered that he was only considering government as an art, and further he was to a certain extent concerned with the "topical" state of his country. He could not then be expected to think much of morality when on all hands that which must be classed unmoral was the order of the day.

And it is true that Machiavelli represents certain forces in our world, it is therefore to Morley certain that he has permanence.

"It is true to say that Machiavelli represents certain living forces in our actual world that Science with its survival of the fittest, unconsciously lends him illegitimate aid. This is because energy, force, will, violence, still keep

alive in the world their resistance to the control and conscience, humanity and right. In so far as he represents one side in that unending struggle, and suggests one set of considerations about it, he retains a place in the literature of modern political systems and Western morals."

It would be hard to find in all Morley's writings a more difficult character dissected with such skill.

Chapter Ten

A FEW MORE WORDS

THERE is always something melancholy in the word Recollections, we know that a book of recollections will be by its very nature of that which is for ever gone. We know that many great personages who at the time of the incident recorded seemed so full of life that it did not seem an exaggeration that we thought they were immortal, are when we come to read of them long since gone that journey from which none return, from which comes no word, that journey that daily draws nearer though we feign would admit that it is so. Yet there is also something cheerful about a book of Recollections, we have glimpses of great men and women, we see life as it was long before we were born, we realise that those giants who in the schoolroom seemed but tormentors to rack our weary brains, were after all much as we are, sometimes glad, sometimes sad, sometimes in the mood when the passing lamp-lighter makes us want to cry, sometimes in the mood when the well lit street does seem the road to joy, sometimes in the mood when in the corners of the room lurk grey shadows which seem to chill, sometimes in the mood when all is good and

bright, then at times that all is but misery and despair.

Apart from the considerations that books of recollections are both gay and sad, we cannot help remarking that to-day many of these kinds of books are merely fatuous. It is no real interest really to know what a butler who hasn't the pluck to say who he is thinks of those who have employed him, it is of no real interest to be treated to the intricate and sordid details of the life of the wife of a Prime Minister. But there are certain books of recollections which stand out, not because they ignore details but because they present to us a reasoned picture of what a great man thinks of the world through which he so swiftly passes.

Of such kind are the Recollections of Morley, they are the thoughts of the man we have been studying in this volume, they have a gentle touch about them as the soft rain watering the flowers, they have a solid placidness as of the ocean on a calm day when no disharmony disturbs the quiet of the waters, they have the sadness of the summer day which when it lengthens into night leaves behind it but a remembrance of brightness, they have the touch of the scholar who hates the sordid vulgarity of our modern life with its cut throat policy of money grubbing, they have behind them a master penman who has travelled a long life with an eye eager and ready to see, an ear ready to hear, a mind that could see that in all men there was something that made them reasonable, creatures who had the right to free thought. To these Recollections we must now turn.

In the mass of material that is contained in these Recollections it is not easy to pick out these which are the most appropriate, there will be those who will have wished that I had chosen this incident, there will be those who will have wished that I might have chosen that, when a book has a mass of really good matter, to make extracts is no easy task. It has been frequently levelled against Chesterton that in his selections from the writings of Thackeray much that should have been included was left out. The truth of that accusation is very doubtful, I do not think Chesterton could have made a better selection, in any case he was bound to disappoint some by not including their particular fancies. In this chapter I must risk the displeasure of some of my reader's they must be lenient if I have left out just that recollection of Morley they so wanted to hear, they must realise that the one put in has probably on the other hand been just the very one the other person wished to hear. And in any case those who wish to know all Morley wrote in his Recollections have but to beg, borrow or if necessary steal the book, my hope is that those who do not know Morley's Recollections will be induced by the selections in this chapter to become acquainted with them. For a book like the present volume has two distinct tasks, it must make the person unacquainted become acquainted, it must make the acquainted become on more intimate terms. I shall then take various episodes in the Recollections by which it will be possible to see in some small degree at least how the writer we

have been studying fared in the affairs of men. Because though we may know much of the mind of a writer through his writings, we can only know his more natural side by seeing him at grips with the actualities of life. I do not of course for an instant infer that in Morley there was any real disunity between what he wrote and what he lived, but to find Morley the brilliant critic of Voltaire does not give us any idea of his behaviour at a dinner party, nor does his behaviour at a dinner party give us any inkling that Morley was the brilliant critic of Voltaire or the careful biographer of Gladstone and Cobden. In the case of a man like Morley we are gracefully permitted to see his life in these Recollections. In passing I put it forward as a suggestion that the reason Morley banned his own biography is to be found in the fact that he probably thought in view of these Recollections such a work was unnecessary. The various eminent men who have tried to suggest that there was some ulterior motive in the wish can be dismissed with the contempt they deserve, cowardice or conceit were two qualities that Morley in no sense ever possessed. Humbleness, if my theory of the Recollections reason for the "banning" is wrong, is the most probable cause of the strange will.

In the earlier part of the book one of the most interesting parts is that which deals with some of the famous contemporaries of Morley. To a noted man like Morley nothing is of more interest than to survey other notable contemporaries. Admirable is the picture of that terrific thinker Herbert

Spencer whose vast knowledge was such, that objection to his philosophy seems to be scorched as though by a sandstorm, yet at the end of life he could but say, what all thinkers must, *agnosco*.

“The head of the Agnostic school on its philosophic and systematic side was, of course Herbert Spencer. His public influence on educated and uneducated minds was daily extending as his work grew larger. It was associated not merely with a special set of philosophic principles and their application but with a great scheme of thought as a whole, and with a series of direct practical application that came home to people every day of their lives.”

Here is a charming homely touch of Herbert Spencer in the atmosphere of his own home, that atmosphere all love whether they be preachers, philosophers, soldiers or even scamps.

“I often visited him in his house at St John's Wood, and on one occasion, I persuaded Balfour to come with me. He was always extremely cordial and evidently fond of brief companionship. We only touched from time to time on serious things, and then he would draw off in haste as fearing cerebral agitation. Shortly after he left St John's Wood for Brighton, I drove up to see him one afternoon. He explained that when you grow old, gardens and trees make but depressing company; what you need are the winds, the changing

light and cloud, the wild tossing of the waters, the forces of nature, in their living commotion. All this he sought as time passed in a pleasant home in the eastern shore of Brighton. In the autumn of 1903 he wrote to me that the end could not be far off—an end to which ‘he looked forward with satisfaction.’ His remains were to be cremated and, as I should suppose, he had forbidden any such ceremony as is performed over the ashes of those who adhere to the current creed.”

Here I may I hope be pardoned a slight digression. It is obvious not only from his writings but also from what we know of Morley from other sources, that he was without any doubt a Rationalist. It is obvious from books such as Voltaire and Diderot how much Morley disliked the doctrines and practices of the ecclesiastical bodies. That he had apparently no direct belief in immortality I have pointed out in my chapter dealing with Rousseau, that this was so, I regretted and do still regret. At the same time one is amazed at the impertinence that cremated Morley with the recitation of much of the burial service of the Church of England. If this service is to be used indiscriminately over all, whatever their creed, then the service is a blatant mockery. Is not disbelief in immortality enough to render the burial service meaningless, when the whole of the essence of that remarkable office, implies not only a direct and unflinching belief in the survival of the soul, but further a particular and specific belief in the Resurrection of the body? If this service is to be performed over the remains

of Rationalists, (who have as much a "creed" as any orthodox follower of the Church), why should not a Mohammedan rite be performed over the Archbishop of Canterbury when he shall depart this life, why should not the rites of the K.K.K. be solemnly recited when a Roman Catholic Nun departs this life? That Morley expressing a keen belief in Rationalism, a direct disbelief in the doctrines of the Church should be cremated with a Hampstead Vicar, as the "officiating Clergyman" is to my mind not only blasphemous, but insulting to the dead and in the worst possible form on the part of the Church of England authorities. I have referred to this at length as the minds of honest thinking men are shocked by such attempted tyranny on the part of the officials of the Established Church.

Here is a very melancholy but characteristic letter from Huxley to Morley, it is to do with the doctrine of annihilation, that at death we are as we were before we were born, an illogical doctrine which seems to have gripped the minds of many famous thinkers. Huxley growing old is not so sure that to be as if he had never been, is not perhaps after all a little less attractive, as the years roll on, as the curtain becomes more ready for its final fall. Thus he writes to Morley :

"It is a curious thing that I find my dislike to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older and nearer the goal. It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on than I did in 1800."

One more picture of Morley's contemporaries must suffice, it shall be of Meredith, Meredith growing old, when the noon day sun has long passed, when the birds are beginning to make ready their resting places, when youth is so far off it seems but a dream, when the night steals on ushered in by a gentle resignation, when the spirit begins to sigh that it may be free from the body, when over hill and dale, land and sea, a gentle hush is creeping, when slowly but surely a famous man is near to the final crossing.

"As one drove to Box Hill to visit George Meredith, whom I had not seen for an age. His disabilities in movements were painful and he is very deaf. Otherwise he was less altered than I had expected. One or two splendid expressions fell from him, but on the whole he was less turbulent and strained than he used to be. We sat in the garden for a couple of hours. Melancholy can never be absent from the last days of a disappearing orb; but this was less melancholy than some—e.g. than Mr Gladstones. Meredith's life-long view of nature and human days fit in with the evening, as with the noonday hour. He has shunned the world, and so it costs him less to leave it. Mr Gladstone has been ever in the world, and though above it in gifts, yet he has ever been of the world, performing splendid, substantial and enduring duties."

In entering Parliament Morley seemed to be a little oppressed by the thought that leaving the

world of books for the world of politics had not, in the past always been a transition to unalloyed happiness. What could he expect, nothing could be more different than the rush and worldly whirl of Westminster and the unwordly leisure of writing a critical book or a long and carefully planned out biography? So he writes how the feeling of doubt seized him when in the spring he was elected member for Newcastle-on-Tyne.

“A transition from books, study and the publicists pen to the vicissitudes of political action is not much favoured by happy precedents. Let us not be shy of going too far back. The most historically influential type among famous men of letters, say what we will, is Cicero, the immortal, the all-wise Tully, and we know Cicero's blood-stained end on the Italian seashore, attended by the ill-omened flight of crows from the temple of Apollo. To pass to nearer times and more moderate names. We need say nothing of Clarendon, Halifax, Bolingbroke or Addison, the first of half a dozen men of letters who held the post of Irish Secretary.”

At a public luncheon in Sunderland Morley in an account of it displays a quality of humour that somehow is not so apparent in his writings as it might be. He is concerned with the tiresome platitudes of admiration addressed by local worthies at public luncheons to parliamentary notabilities.

“As I had to listen to six speeches of welcome

and six speeches of thanks I felt at last like the man in *Zadig*. The king to cure him of vanity sent a chorus to sing to him every three minutes :

Que son mérite est extrême !
Que de graces ! que de grandeur !
Ah combien monseigneur
Doit être content de lui-meme !

The first day was delightful, the second dubious, the third tiresome, the fourth insupportable, the fifth a torment—and so in like manner the twelfth dose of ‘the accomplished writer,’ etc., etc., was as terrible as sugary champagne.”

If only chairmen would take note that public men of the fame of Morley do not need to be *told* of their virtues, they *know* them far too well !

Not the least fascinating among these Recollections is that vivid description Morley pens of the herculean task of writing the biography of Gladstone, he shall tell the story himself.

“The attempt to tell the story of Mr Gladstone’s character and career was proposed to me. My nearest friends public and private, men of much experience men of much experience both in books and in affairs, and well acquainted with the ground to be covered, were unanimous in discouraging. The first sight of the huge mountain of material at Hawarden might well make the stoutest literary heart quail. The general expectations from the history of a man who had for more than

sixty years filled a place of shining fame in the eye of the world, would be hard to satisfy. On the other hand, the confidence that he had reposed in me for some years during the most critical episode of his life, left a charge that I could not without both of ingratitude and cowardice evade. So to work I went. Explorations in the crowded archives, with their two or three hundred thousand pieces began in 1899. Though the subject was inspiring it was no occasion for high attempts in literary expression. To overmaster and compress the raw material, and to reproduce from it the linaments of a singularly subtle and elastic mind, and the qualities of one of the most powerful and long-lived athletes that ever threw himself into the parliamentary arena—*hoc opus* ! I was much pressed to place the book before the public in instalments—a counsel only less pernicious than the more urgent protest against any publication at all within forty or fifty years, when everybody who knew and might be supposed to care would be dead. The task occupied four years of pretty vigorous exertion. The book went on and grew far larger than I either expected or liked. But there was no hitch. The volumes appeared on the appointed day in October 1903, as punctually as if by act of Parliament. It was no common satisfaction to me to try to pay a debt by inscribing the book to the electors of the Montrose Burghs, in grateful recognition of the confidence and indulgence

with which they had honoured me. The public was vividly interested, as with so renowned a hero might have been expected. There were reasonable critics and no enemy. The sales for the first year were over 30,000 and the price being high this was thought excellent. Cheaper editions followed in the autumn of next year ; 30,000 copies went off in a week, 130,000 copies had been absorbed in all. So here let me bid his shade farewell and farewell. If those are right who say that the worth of a biography depends on its being done by one with whole-hearted and candid attachments to the man he writes, then I am safe, aut laudatus aut excusatus. In biography the old rule for imaginative creation holds equally good—all depends upon the subject."

Morley need have had no fear that in even the minutest detail was his great biography anything but worthy of the most distinguished of English statesmen.

It would be a pleasing task to write a book on each of the works of Morley, not the least pleasing of such a task would be a volume on his Recollections. This pleasure I must deny myself, with the hope that the reader may also feel the desire long ere this to write books upon the books of Morley. This thought about the Recollections shall end with the delightful words of Morley on the game men call Life.

" At best a man's life is so short. Labour for bread fills most of his waking hours ; it

dulls by monotony, or exhausts by strain or both. Needs of life and circumstances are the constant spur. Wise students will not all of them too readily forget the desolating sentence of Gibbon, greatest of literary historians, that history is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind. In my varying parleying with the Catholic clergy in Ireland. I was sometimes asked in reproachful jest what my friend Voltaire would have said. As if Voltaire's genius did not include more than one man's share of common sense, and as if common sense did not find a Liberalist advance, for instance, in the principle of a free church in a free state ! A painful interrogatory, I must confess, emerges. Has not your school—the Darwins, Spencers, Renans, and the rest—held the civilised world, both old and new alike, European and transatlantic, in the hollow of their hand for two generations past ? Is it quite clear that their influence has been so much more potent than the gospel of the various churches ? Circumspice. Is not diplomacy, unkindly called by Voltaire, the field of lies, as able as it ever was to dupe governments and governed by grand abstract catch words veiling obscure and inexplicable purposes, and turning the whole world over with blood and tears to a strange Witches' Sabbath ? Now and then I paused as I sauntered slow over the fading heather. My little humble friend squat on her haunches, looking wistfully up, eager to resume her

endless hunt after she knows not what just like the chartered metaphysician. So to my home in the falling daylight."

It is unnecessary to add more. In the falling daylight, Morley has passed on. The squirrels which every day play just outside my windows, still hunt for that which they do not know, still philosophers, priests, statesmen, search after truth, still they live and die, still they must ask as Pilate asked so many years ago What is Truth? *Agnoscimus.*

Chapter Eleven

"THE PALL MALL GAZETTE."

OWING to the will of Lord Morley desiring that no documents pertaining to his activities should be used, I have been unable to use any information with regard to the period in which Morley edited the *Pall Mall Gazette*, other than the few references contained in the Recollections. Slender as they are, they are not without interest. Morley was no doubt a great Editor, he edited a famous paper and gathered round him a brilliant staff. It is somewhat melancholy to refer to the *Pall Mall Gazette* now that the paper is dead. It is not the place here to go at all fully into the question of the end of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Yet it is not inconvenient to mention in passing that the fate of the paper was a hard one, the journal filled a place in the press that is now empty. The *Pall Mall Gazette* was when it died acknowledged to be the journal of the cultivated classes, yet it was also beginning to appeal to a wider public. Two factors contributed to its downfall, the one that a huge newspaper combine came along, the second that the proprietor did not appear to have

the interests of the paper at heart, beyond a wish that it should be the organ to report his parliamentary speeches, which as I have before said did not command much notice from the rest of the press.

If we exclude the Dickens Editorship (short though it was), of the *Daily News*, it does not seem an exaggeration to say that in Morley as Editor the press possessed the finest man of letters it has ever had. Whether Editors are better as men of letters or not is a moot point, in the main it seems that literary qualifications on any scale are not necessary to the newspaper Editor. An Editor has essentially to deal with the thing of the moment, he has to count dead anything of the day before yesterday, he has to watch with careful gaze the trend of the public mind, he has to watch that his journal above all does not offend his leading advertisers. He need not really write a line of the paper himself, his name need be scarcely known outside his own office. With a man of letters the reverse is the case, he needs to realise the importance of that which is past, he needs to realise what literary expression is, he needs to watch far less carefully than the Editor the mind of the public, but it is imperative that he makes his name known to as wide a public as possible.

In the case of Morley we have the very fascinating spectacle of the combination of the mind of an Editor and the mind of one who could write deep studies of noted philosophers. The press of to-day is of course vastly different from

the days when Morley edited the *Pall Mall Gazette*, without going into a comparison, which is no part of this book, I do not think that it is an overstatement to say that the press is far better to-day than it was when Morley sat in the Editorial chair. The facilities for getting news are now so enormous, the purse behind the press is so colossal, the power of the press politically is so terrific, that it tends to produce day by day something that is better and better. I have no sympathy with those supercilious persons who see a menace in the activities of the press, they might as well try to check the Falls of Niagara with a brick wall, as to attempt to suppress the press. If we may attempt to predict the future, it appears likely that the newspaper combine will ever grow, private enterprise daily becomes swallowed up by syndicate, we have syndicate soap, we drink syndicate wines, we bank our money in syndicates, we cannot then expect to read our news except by syndicate.

It is now well over forty years ago since Morley stepped into the Editorial chair of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, when it had been vacated by that wonderful journalistic genius Greenwood. Distinguished indeed have been the Editors of the famous evening journal right through the long years until the days that saw the end of the paper; with Mr D. M. Sutherland in the Editorial chair, a brilliant journalist with a calm dispassionate outlook and possessed of the power of making right judgments.

Of the taking over of the *Pall Mall Gazette* by Morley his own words shall tell. Thus he writes

looking back when the words were penned some thirty-seven years, long enough for him to almost forget that he was then comparatively young.

" In a week or two I took charge of an evening print that had been raised to well deserved prominence by the talents, industry and zealous political sincerity of its first editor. Greenwood had a most ingenious pen, his judgments alike in politics and letters were independent without being flighty, the topics that interested and absorbed him were well chosen and thoroughly worked, and he attracted a staff of writers of ampler literary training than his own ; but they owed much to the liveliness, gaiety and clever pointed insight of an editor who, from his early days as a journeyman printer, had carried on a hard fight with naked realities of life and had learned to explore them with energetic and unquenched spirit. He soon began to do his best to encourage a vigorous reaction against the Liberalism associated with Mill in one field and Gladstone in another. Hitherto he had taken it on trust as other people took it ; but as things went on as the incidental drawbacks of the creed came into view, a Tory instinct that has often been quite as deep a root in born sons of toil as in nobility and gentry, revolted both against theories of liberty equality and fraternity, and against crusades of sentimental passion for turning the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe."

This was then the paper that Morley took over to be Editor, very briefly as though it was quite an every day occurrence; he writes of the "taking over."

"Of this gallant ship, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of which Jingo ideas had thus been the cargo, I now undertook to be the captain, under a liberal minded and courageous owner, as loyal and bold as he was indulgent."

And as assistant Morley had in Stead one of the most picturesque of many picturesque Fleet Street personalities.

"Stead has said enough of our relations. He was invaluable: abounding in journalistic resource, eager in convictions, infinitely bold, candid, laborious in surefooted mastery of all the facts, and bright with a cheerfulness and geniality that no difference of opinion between us and none of the passing embarrassments of the day could ever for a moment damp. His extraordinary vigour and spirit made other people seem wet blankets, sluggish, creature of moral *defaillance*."

It will not have been forgotten that Stead perished in the horrible disaster to the Titanic, that "unsinkable" ship that sank on its first voyage, possibly as a warning that we cannot build unsinkable ships because we are only human and liable to errors.

"After a striking career that was not without melodramatic phases and some singular vagaries

of mind, he perished in a collision between a giant liner and an iceberg on the Atlantic Ocean.”

In its policy under Morley the *Pall Mall Gazette* was quite uncompromising, it set its face resolutely against the doctrine of coercion in Ireland for Morley rightly felt that “coercion was of course the standardised medicine that always left the malady where it was, unless it made it worse.” So then naturally enough the *Pall Mall Gazette* had no sympathy with the Coercion Act which even Bright admitted, after, had been a mistake.

“ In the *Pall Mall Gazette* we fought against that mistake steadily from evening to evening mainly on the ground that it would prove ineffective for its own special purpose and would prejudice besides the reception of remedial legislation.”

I have said that humour in Morley's writings does not take a prominent place, but he was not without it in his dealings with men. One incident when Morley was Editor shall be given, like most Editors he was inundated with requests for posts on his staff.

“ A young man once applied to me for work when I was editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. I asked whether he had any special gift or turn “ Yes ” he said. “ I think I have a natural turn for *Invective* ! ” “ That's capital ” said I “ but in any particular line may I ask ? ” “ Oh no—General *Invective*.”

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Fleet Street has always been the home of men who have found eminence either in their own profession or after in politics or letters. Morley found eminence in both, more especially in the world of letters, but the time that he was Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* cannot, in the light of subsequent history, be counted the least important part of his career.

Chapter Twelve

THE PLACE OF MORLEY IN LITERATURE

IT is never an easy task to attempt to determine the place a writer takes in literature. Yet of course some writers are easier of placing than others. In my books on Chesterton and Belloc I contended that the main difficulty of placing them lay in the fact that they wrote so many different kinds of books, thus it was not easy to say whether Chesterton's real place was as a poet or as an Essayist, Belloc could not be designated easily, he might be a historian, he might be an Essayist. I came to the conclusion that Chesterton filled no exact niche, he was "unique," I came to the conclusion that it would be as an historian that Belloc would find his permanent position.

In the case of Morley this preliminary difficulty of literary position does not assert itself, Morley was first of all a writer of critical studies, and secondly he was a careful biographer. What then we shall have to discuss in this chapter is how far Morley has a permanent position in literature and how he stands as regards the trend of the public taste in this twentieth century, because above all Morley is a serious writer in an age which is

popularly supposed to be rather light and ephemeral. How far then, to discuss our first proposition, has Morley a permanent place in the world of letters?

In many ways human nature in its essentials does not change, violent evolutionists may see in their own imaginations signs of such vast progression that they may be inclined to see in the strict sense a new man and a new woman. Religion on the other hand, wrong though it is in its ridiculous dependence upon forms and ceremonies, bigoted as it is in its insularity of creed, is right when it insists that in certain matters men do not change. Nothing has been so ridiculous lately as the talk of the new woman, in her essence she is the same as the day that Eve picked a sour apple in the Garden of Eden and bullied her husband into eating it. What is meant by the new woman is that she has taken on new responsibilities, what we mean when we say that evolution is all round is that we are learning of the wonders that surround us and learn to use them. In its essentials mankind never changes, mankind is born, mankind lives its allotted number of years, mankind dies. Always there are some who believe this theory, always there are those who believe that. In the case of literature we are always being told that only that which is new, that which is of this century is of any attraction. This I believe is a profound error, I believe in every generation there will be certain people who wish to read certain books. There will always be those who like to read in novel form life as it is in their

day, there will be never boys who do not like to read of books of adventure, we shall ever have those who will only read Essays, those who will only read writers of long forgotten centuries. Apart then from the actual worth of the books of Morley, this fact that mankind always wishes to read certain books is sufficient to ensure their permanence.

But this is only to take a particular example from a general given proposition that mankind does not change. We must then proceed further, are the actual books that Morley wrote, likely to, on their own merits have perpetuity?

I cannot see any reason whatever to suggest that the works of Morley will ever suffer the fate of being entirely neglected, they have such mass of scholarship, they are on the whole so fair, they deal with such important subjects that it would be a ridiculous presumption and only worthy of the most superficial of critics to deny them permanence. Can it be possibly imagined that there will ever be a generation born that will not have some interest in Voltaire, who will not be glad to read the clear understanding that Morley has of his enormous genius and also his superficialities? Are we to conceive for one single instant that Englishmen will be so far removed from any ideals of true statesmanship that they will never turn to the Life of Gladstone, a work that surely must stand out as one of the most courageous feats in literature? Will there ever be students of the French Revolution stupid enough to leave on one side the masterly exposition of Rousseau so

ably written by Morley? Is Diderot so dead that the most masterly study written of him shall be never read? Are people so dull of perception that they cannot read a book about Walpole, are they so destitute of appreciation that the philosophical system of Machiavelli has no attraction? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, if the generations that are to come have no interest in the great builders of the past, if only that which is of the *actual* age in which they live is to claim their attention, then it might be in spite of their vast merits, that the works of Morley would die. But I do not believe that it will be so, I believe there will always be those rather unworldly souls who in the quiet of their chambers love to dwell on the greatness of men long centuries passed on, I believe there will always be those who will wish to learn of such questions as the Literary Preparation for the French Revolution or the state of politics soon after the death of Queen Anne.

As I have said that as mankind does not change in certain essentials, so also there will always be people who wish to read the type of books written by Morley. So again the books themselves deal with subjects that will never be dead to certain minds.

To discuss briefly our second proposition as to how Morley will fare as regards this century. I have really already answered this question in the contention that his books would always command a certain section of the public. It would be I think probably unwise to predict any sudden popularity for him, the time is not yet when the

mass public will read serious writing in preference to lighter reading. Morley though he is of his kind extremely direct in style, though his work is logical, though his work is, as I have before remarked, delicately interspersed with light touches yet it cannot be called light reading. I think that probably it will be truest to predict that there will always be a certain public for Morley for the reasons I have already indicated. Those who have since his death, prophesied that his works might not live, are I feel in error, they are misunderstanding human nature, they are failing to realise that Morley wrote of men who though long dead in the flesh, are never dead in literature.

There is no doubt that Morley looked upon literature as a serious and great and noble channel to lead men to think upon things that are weighty. There is a certain feeling of melancholy apparent in all his writings, we always feel that the thought of the shortness of life and its strange mysteries was ever beside him. It is not to be denied that we cannot discover in Morley, much to make us believe that he thought the possibility of an after life anything but remote in the extreme.

Though I do not agree with some critics that humour is much felt in his writings, it is also obvious that it is not by any means absent, the example of the sea sickness of Hume, is quite a good example of his sly shafts. But on the whole it is the serious side of life that makes its appeal in the works of Morley.

Of firm opinions Morley is not slow in his writings to challenge anything that does not fall

in with his outlook ; yet he cannot be called intolerant. There is no doubt that his creed was that of the Rationalist, he is never in sympathy with the dogmas and the superstitions that exist in the Churches. It has been said often that his best work was the political biographies, this I do not agree with. I feel that it is much more probable that his lasting work which will be most widely read will be his critical studies of Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot.

It is impossible whether in his studies or biographies to be bored with Morley, his style is so direct (such was his ideal of literature) so convincing, so polished, that we are never wearied however deep is the subject written about. I have no sympathy with certain critics who deny to Morley the gift of writing good English, he did what is more important than obeying all the canons of style, that is, he wrote so that the reader could easily understand. There is no attempted pose in his writings, Morley says what he means and he says it so that there can be no doubt in the reader's mind as to exactly what he does mean.

In the true sense Morley was a man of letters, he had the love of the past that is the literary man's birthright, he had the reverence for those who had been great figures, that produces the careful biographer and the literary critic.

It is of course true that Morley broadly speaking concerns himself with this world, that he was an unsatisfied man in some senses is all too obvious. He was a Rationalist, he had no sympathy with

the Churches who have made a Religion out of a mass of unproven matter, he saw nothing that indicated that the grave was not the end of all. He belonged to that ever increasing school that does not affirm because it has been told, he belonged to those men who keep this world sane, those who prefer Reason to Dogma, those who work slowly but surely. Of men of letters of the last century Morley is among the greatest, he was perhaps to the end of his life a student. In common with all men whether they be great or small he has passed on but his work remains, and will remain so long as mankind wishes to know of those who have been the pioneers of movements whether in thought or in action.

THE END

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